




HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND

BY

A·R·HOPE MONCRIEFF
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
WILLIAM·SMITH

To Bat
with every good wish
from George.

Christmas, 1931



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
INVERNESS.



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Preface

IN *Bonnie Scotland* was promised a further volume that should be devoted to the sterner and wilder aspects of Caledonia. That book dealt with the main body of Highlands and Lowlands, more familiar to the gentle tourist for whose patronage it was a candidate. This one, whose title might have been qualified as *West Highlands*, deals with the less visited side that is still Highland indeed, both in ruder natural features and in a life holding out longer against the trimming and taming of Sassenach intromissions. The author, as before, has tried to weave a pattern of entertaining stripes and checks upon a groundwork of information, all making a darker-hued tartan than is worn in the centre of Bonnie Scotland. Another metaphor would put it that he has prepared a brisk, perhaps frothy, but, it is hoped, not unpalatable, brew of "heather-ale," which contains in solution more solid ingredients than may be manifest to every reader.



Contents

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
"TO THE HIGHLANDS BOUND"	I

CHAPTER II

TARTANS	19
-------------------	----

CHAPTER III

THE LAND OF LORNE	43
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

THE HOLY ISLES	65
--------------------------	----

CHAPTER V

PIBROCHS AND CORONACHS	88
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI

TOURISTS	117
--------------------	-----

The Highlands and Islands

CHAPTER VII

	PAGE
LOCHABER NO MORE !	146

CHAPTER VIII

THE OUTER HEBRIDES	171
------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER IX

THULE	195
-----------------	-----

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN OF THE MIST	217
--------------------------------	-----

INDEX	233
-----------------	-----

List of Illustrations

In Colour

1. Inverness	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
2. Glen Rosa, Arran	8
3. Balmoral Castle	17
4. Cawdor Castle	32
5. Loch Linnhe	37
6. Inveraray Castle and Cross.	44
7. Glencoe	49
8. Oban Bay at Night	53
9. The Islands of Oronsay and Colonsay	60
10. Iona Cathedral	64
11. Interior, Iona Cathedral	69
12. Staffa	71
13. The Island of Eigg	74
14. The Island of Canna	76
15. Tobermory	83
16. The Hills of Jura	85
17. Port Askaig, Islay	92
18. Ben Nevis	94
19. The Island of Rum, from Arisaig	97
20. The River Spey near Fochabers	112
21. Castle Urquhart, Loch Ness	117

The Highlands and Islands

	FACING PAGE
22. Glen Sligachan, Skye	124
23. Loch Coruisk, Skye	129
24. The Falls of Spean, Inverness-shire	144
25. Crofters' Cottages, Onich, Inverness-shire	161
26. The Standing Stones of Callernish, Island of Lewis	176
27. The Herring Fleet in Stornoway Bay, Island of Lewis	197
28. An Orcadian Fireplace	204
29. Kirkwall Cathedral, Orkney	209
30. Caithness Coast near Dunnet Head	213
31. Kyle of Tongue and Ben Loyal	220
32. Dunrobin Castle, Sutherlandshire	224

Sketch-Map on page xii



SKETCH-MAP OF SCOTLAND

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

CHAPTER I

“TO THE HIGHLANDS BOUND”

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS, as we Scots chuckle to ourselves, is the one phrase which an Englishman cannot mispronounce. I read lately a book of Scottish travel by an American, who made my countrymen leave out their *h*'s like any Cockney ; then I at once laid aside this writer's observations as vain. The humblest Scot never drops an *h*, unless in words like *hospital*, which the Southron painfully aspirates in his anxiety not to be judged vulgar, as in living memory he has tacked this test of breeding on to *humour* and *humble*. More fairly we may be charged with overdoing the *h* sound ; and there are two or three words in which we insert it : *huz*, for instance, said in some parts for “us.” In the game of “tig,” *anglicé* “touch” or “tag,” my childish conception of the formula “who's *hit*?” made it a participle meaning “struck” or “touched,” till I heard German children crying in like case “*Ich bin es !*” when I did not know how *hit* is the old English pronoun,

The Highlands and Islands

preserved by Scots dialects, which are the truest copies of our national tongue.

Once, indeed—it was in Derbyshire—I came across a man speaking with a strong West Highland accent, yet misusing the letter *h*. This seemed such a prodigy that I made a point of getting it explained. It turned out that he was the son of a Yorkshire shepherd, who had taken service on the Isle of Mull. There the boy came to be most at home in Gaelic, while what English he had was on a bad model—the reverse of *lingua Toscana in bocca Romana*. His younger brothers, he told me, grew up hardly speaking English at all, and he, the bilingual member of the family, had often to interpret between them and their mother, who could never get her tongue round the strange speech. We speak of a mother-tongue ; but it is from their play-fellows that active lads seem to learn fastest. The Italian author De Amicis relates an experience like that of this Yorkshire family : transplanted at the age of two from a Genoese to a Piedmontese town, he picked up the Piedmontese dialect so readily that his own mother could not always understand him when once he got loose from her apron-strings.

In the far Highlands and Islands can still be found countrymen of ours who speak no language but Gaelic, these hardly, indeed, unless among older people, the rising generation being schooled into the dominant tongue, in their case often a stiff book English, spangled with Lowland idioms and native constructions. Dis-trust the author who reports true Highlanders talking

“To the Highlands Bound”

broad Scots after the school of Stratford-atte-Bow. This remark does not fully apply to the Central and Inner Highlands, where some generations have passed since people living a mile off spoke tongues foreign to each other, as may still happen on the borders of Wales. In the Highlands best known to tourists, the blending of blood, language, and customs has gone so far that a stranger may be excused for confounding a Perthshire strath with the true kailyard scenery. Beyond the Great Glen, still more markedly beyond the sounds, firths, and minches of the west coast, we find Highlanders less touched by the spirit of a practical age, whose first breath sets them shivering and drawing their tartans about them as they wake from fond dreams of a romantic past. All Scotland, alas ! has been too much overrun by the alien clan of MacMillion, who, as one of its most eloquent sons complains, go on cutting it up into “moors” and “forests,” and its rivers into “beats.” Sheep-farming on a large scale and other industries have here and there brought Saxon sojourners, like my Derbyshire acquaintance, to the western wilds. The aristocracy are much Anglified, even in these “Highlands of the Highlands.” But the mass of their human life is still Celtic, or at least Gaelic, if language can be trusted, with an old blend of Teuton infused both by sea and land, through Norse, Norman, and Saxon invaders, and with touches of Spanish Armada or other shipwrecked blood surmisable here and there among waifs and strays all going to make up a stock that may have absorbed who knows what prehistoric

The Highlands and Islands

elements. The controversy between Thwackum and Square is not more famous than that hot debate between Mr. Jonathan Oldbuck and Sir Arthur Wardour, which stands as warning to a modest writer not to quarrel with any readers, at least at an early stage of his book, by taking sides on certain much-vexed ethnological and philological questions.

To reach those rain-bitten and wave-carved coasts where the true Highlander mainly holds his own, we have various ways now made smooth by arts which go on sapping his seclusion. It does not much matter which way the stranger takes, for he can hardly go wrong, to understand how right Gray was when he told his mole-eyed generation, "the Lowlands were worth seeing once, but the mountains are ecstatic, and ought to be visited in pilgrimage once a year." All roads to the Inner Highlands lead through the Outer Highlands, more fully described in *Bonnie Scotland*.

For leisurely tourists the choice road is still by water, down the Clyde from Glasgow. If the name of this river be derived, as is said, from a Celtic word meaning *clean*, that title has become a mockery, since its banks from Glasgow to Greenock sucked together the most industrious life of Scotland. "Come, bright Improvement, on the Car of Time!" sang Glasgow's youthful poet, but lived to exclaim against the questionable shape in which came a spirit he had invoked so hopefully :

And call they this Improvement?—to have changed,
My native Clyde, thy once romantic shore,

“To the Highlands Bound”

Where Nature's face is banished and estranged,
And Heaven reflected in thy wave no more ;
Whose banks, that sweetened May-day's breath before,
Lie sere and leafless now in summer's beam,
With sooty exhalations covered o'er ;
And for the daisied green-sward, down thy stream
Unightly brick-lanes smoke, and clanking engines gleam.

The banks of the Clyde have not grown more Arcadian since Campbell's day, so the traveller does well to hurry by rail over the windings of the smoky river, embarking at Greenock or Helensburgh, where it broadens out into a firth deep enough to drown the offences of man. Here launch forth a fleet of steam-boats, whose admirals, almost alone in Britain, rival the luxurious arks of the Hudson and the Mississippi ; and here begins a “delectable voyage,” too often spoiled by rain, else warmly praised by a hundred pens, for instance in Colonel Lockhart's *Fair to See*, one of the most amusing of Highland novels, as readers might not guess from this opening passage :

The mountain panorama which greets you as you start, noble though it be, is but the noble promise of still better things ; for it cannot show you the exquisite variety, the contrasts, the combinations, the marvellous chiaroscuro, the subtle harmonies, the sublime discords, that meet you and thrill you at every turn, passing through the inner penetralia of all that is most glorious in the land of mountain and of flood. Gliding through those strange sounds and estuaries, with their infinite sinuosities, traced about peninsula and cape and island—traced as it were with a design of delighting the eye with sudden presentments of scenic surprises, as it were with a design of furnishing not one, but twenty points of view, wherefrom

The Highlands and Islands

to consider each salient wonder and beauty round which they seem to conduct you proudly on their glittering paths—there must be something far wrong with you if you find no delight in all this. For here indeed you have a succession of the noblest pictures,—no mere iteration of rugged mountains, monotonous in their grim severity and sublime desolation,—no mere sleepy tracts of unbroken forest, nor blank heaths losing themselves vaguely in the horizon, nor undulating expanses of lawn-like pasture-land, but with something of all these features blending in each of the splendid series; every feature in turn claiming its predominance, when all the others seem to pose themselves about the one central object, sinking for the moment their own individualities that it may be glorified.

For the first stage of this voyage, indeed, the shore is too much masked by a long line of bathing and boating resorts, to which Glasgow folk love to escape even from the comforts of the Saltmarket. On the right-hand side stands Dunoon, whose fragment of ruined fortress looks stranded above a flood of hotels, shops, and villas, in which several villages have run together into a town. Farther down, on the Isle of Bute, Rothesay makes the focus of Clyde pleasure trips, no mushroom resort, but seat of an ancient royal castle that titled the heir of Scotland. The Stuarts still flourish here in the person of the Marquis of Bute, who is as great a man in the Principality of Wales as in the Dukedom of Rothesay. The old town has expanded into a couple of miles of esplanade, curving below green hills upon a land-locked bay, its surface lively with yachts, pleasure boats, and steamers that in the summer season turn out myriads of excursionists to

“ To the Highlands Bound ”

sack the joys of the place. I was about to belittle Rothesay by calling it the Southend of Glasgow ; but in view of its hydros, its mineral spring, and its background of dwarf Highland scenery, its character may better be expressed in terms of chemical analysis :

Torquay	.	.	.	.	.	.	21
Douglas	.	.	.	.	.	.	13.45
Cowes	.	.	.	.	.	.	16
Weston-super-Mare	.	.	.	.	.	.	14.10
Scarborough	.	.	.	.	.	.	14
Clacton	.	.	.	.	.	.	6.25
Blackpool	.	.	.	.	.	.	12.07
Residuum of Local Peculiarities	.	.	.	.	.	.	3.13
							<hr/>
							100.00
							<hr/>

In winter, when “ Wee Macgregors ” and the like desert its waters, Rothesay becomes the Ventnor of Scotland, recommended by a sheltered western mildness, which indeed its own guide-book advocate has to qualify as “ rather humid.” Even in ordinary winters it may bear comparison with South Devon or the Isle of Wight, while sometimes a whim of Nature has set the thermometer standing higher here than at Mentone. This mildness is attested by exotic plants in Lord Bute’s park, whose late owner, Disraeli’s “ Lothair,” for a time maintained colonies of kangaroos, beavers, and other outlandish creatures. Whatever harsh things may be said of Eastern Scotland’s climate, the West Highland skies are more apt to be “ soft,” and to snow only “ whites.” Some patriotic Scots go so far as to

The Highlands and Islands

claim that their country is on the whole warmer than England, no part of the former being over forty miles from the Gulf Stream that so muggily wraps the islands of our far north.

For the rest, Bute makes a miniature of the Highlands, once rich in chapels and hermitages, as in monuments of a dimmer faith, too many of which have been destroyed, like that monastic ruin carted away to baser uses by a thrifty farmer, who thought to gain his lord's approval for "clearing" a beautiful spot. A modern memorial, not to be pointed out to French visitors, is the woods of Southhall, planted by a veteran owner as plan of the battle of Waterloo. The boss of the island, Barone Hill, rises over 500 feet, from which, or from the park above Rothelay, fond local eyes have tried to count a dozen counties, and half a dozen are certainly in view. "Why don't you pretend to see to America, while you are about it?" quoth a rude Southron to some local prospect-monger; and the dry answer was, "Ye can see farther than that—as far as the moon!"

Bute, of course, sinks to a mere Isle of Wight when compared with the grandeurs and loveliness of Arran, lying to the south. This island indeed has scenery which some declare unsurpassed in Britain, notably on the flanks of its Goatfell summit. Yet while Glen Rosa, Glen Sannox, and Loch Ranza have often been famed by painters, it seems the case that poets, novelists, and other artists in words make not much copy out of the charms of Arran. One feels inclined to suspect authors



GLEN ROSA, ARRAN.

“ To the Highlands Bound ”

of Sybarite tastes, since a weak point of Arran as tourist ground is, or has been, a want of accommodation under the shadow of a ducal house that looked askance on building. The only two townlets on the island, Brodick and Lamlash, count their population in hundreds ; and their hotels are hard put to it to accommodate the strangers who have often had to be content with a shake-down in the room used as an English chapel, or with shelter in one of the few bathing machines ; I have heard of a whole boatful of excursionists lodged in a hay-field. Holiday quarters in this paradise are engaged for a year ahead, and Piccadilly prices may have to be paid as rent of a hovel. Thus hitherto Arran has been preserved as a haunt of real nature-lovers, and within two or three hours' sail of Glasgow one could find an almost pristine solitude of purple heather and solemn crags all unprofaned by watering-place gaiety or luxury. The sourest Radical of sound taste might here exclaim, “ God bless the Duke ! ”—not of Argyll—yet one wonders what a late duke's creditors thought of such a demesne being kept clear from vulgar considerations of profit.

I am not going to try my hand at word-pictures of these glorious landscapes, for “ how can a man can what he canna can ? ” as I once heard a Highland lad sagaciously express himself in our foreign tongue. One had better not invite one's readers even to land on Arran, lest there might be a difficulty in getting them off again ; but if they do, let them not omit the ascent of Goatfell, no perilous adventure, for a view hardly

The Highlands and Islands

surpassed in Scotland, as shown in Black's *Where shall we go?* a work over which the present author has some rights of plagiarism.

The summit is composed of mighty rocks, ensconced among which one may shelter from the searching wind and gaze in comfort at the wild picture around and below—Glen Rosa at our feet, with its sharp precipices beyond rising into the pinnacled heights of A Chir and Cir Vohr; the saddle into Glen Sannox (the glen itself is invisible from here), and the equally sharp and even loftier ridges beyond that glen; the nearer range of Goatfell itself extending round a nameless glen below us, and terminating in a sharp peak that overhangs the village of Corrie; and beyond the limits of the island itself and the broad belt of sea which allows the eye to range unchecked, a glorious bewilderment of heights and hollows innumerable, with here the smoke of a manufacturing town, and there the familiar shape of some mainland mountain-giant, the view extending on a clear day, it is said, from Ben Nevis to the Isle of Man.

Arran owes its unsophisticated state also in part to lying a little off the highway of travel. Strong-stomached voyagers may round the Mull of Cantyre, to be tossed upon Atlantic waves, and thus get a chance of seeing Ailsa Craig, "Paddy's Milestone," whose cliffs are in some respects finer than the much-visited Staffa. The gentle tourist takes an easier and straighter line to Oban. His boat threads the beautiful Kyles of Bute, then stands across to Tarbert, on the Isthmus of Cantyre, from the farther side of which goes the steamer to Islay. Up Loch Fyne is reached Ardrishaig, terminus of the big ark whose Oban-bound

“To the Highlands Bound”

passengers are transferred to a smaller craft for the Crinan Canal cut, that brings them over to the island-studded and cliff-cornered sounds of the west coast. Well then for the land-lubber that he fares forward on one of Messrs. MacBrayne's stout craft! To play the Viking here without experience were a perilous task, so thick-set are these waters with rocks and shallows, so tormented by sudden shifty squalls, so distracted by currents, eddies, and rushing tideways. But the steamer pants masterfully through the Dorus Mor, keeps clear of the Maelstrom of Corryvreckan, whose roar may be heard leagues off in calm weather, and steers safe along the islands of the Firth of Lorne, past the great slate quarries on Easdale, round the bridged island of Seil, and inside the dark heights of Kerrera, by a narrow sound to reach its port at Oban, whose once mighty strongholds are overshadowed by such an eruption of smart hotels and villas.

Here we come into touch with the London, Midland & Scottish Railway, the shortest way to this “Charing Cross of the Highlands.” Having entered the mountains beyond Stirling Castle, passing near the Trossachs and under the Braes of Balquhiddy, the line turns westward to wind through the mountains of southern Perthshire, and reaches Argyll by some of Scotland's grandest scenes, finding a way between the head of Loch Awe and the mighty Ben Cruachan, after a glimpse, at Dalnally, into the strath of Glenorchy, oasis-like after terrific Glen Ogle and dreary Glen Lochy. The railway holds on through the stern Pass

The Highlands and Islands

of Brander, scene of the *Highland Widow*, where cairns still record the crushing of the Macdougalls of Lorne by Robert Bruce. Then we gain Oban by Loch Etive, whose upper part runs into one of the grandest of Highland glens, and its waters rush out with the tide in Ossian's Falls of Lora, through the narrow throat now bridged by a branch to Ballachulish.

On one side, this line takes in tributaries of tourist traffic from Loch Earn and Loch Tay, and roads through the grand Breadalbane Highlands marked by their name as heart of ancient Albin. On the other side, by coaches and steamboats, Ben Cruachan is reached from Inveraray or from the head of Loch Long. Campbell seems the dominant name now in this country, but once it was the land of the Macgregors, whose hearts still turn to fair Glenorchy, whence they were driven landless and nameless. This ancient clan stood as model for Scott's Vich-Alpines, a name which they in fact claim as descended from Gregor, son of King Alpin. Not every one reads Scott nowadays ; few read his introductions and miscellaneous essays ; and perhaps nobody, without special interest in the subject, will go through Miss Murray Macgregor's elaborate history of her name ; so there will be many of my readers to whom may not come amiss a short digression on the peculiar fortunes of a clan distinguished by ferocity among warlike neighbours in a ruthless age. It was not the Saxon that to them "came with iron hand," but men of their own blood and speech, who "from our fathers rent the land" about which the moon could

“ To the Highlands Bound ”

be significantly known as “ Macgregor’s Lantern,” as also indeed “ Macfarlane’s Lantern,” and the lamp of other Highlandmen bent on business that would not well bear brighter light.

From very early times the Macgregors passed for Ishmaelites, every hand against them, their fastnesses again and again threatened by commissions of fire and sword as soon as troubled Scottish kings could attempt to settle the quarrels of the Highland border. Their most resounding offence was the slaughter of the Colquhouns at Glenfruin by Loch Lomond, a little before James VI. posted off to his softer throne in London. This was a fair fight, made flagrant in tradition by the murder of the Dumbarton schoolboys who had come out to see the battle, as in our day lads might go some way to a football match. It is stated that the Macgregor chief bid these non-combatants take refuge in a church, either to keep them out of the way of shots, or to have under his hand a troop of hostages from among the principal families in Scotland; and that it was his foster-brother or some of his followers who stabbed the unfortunate youths, to the chief’s indignation. Another legend tells of a barn in which the poor boys were burned to death. One tradition points out two murderers, who henceforth lived as outlaws from the clan. Miss Murray Macgregor naturally defends her kinsmen from the charge of an atrocity so heavily weighing on their own conscience that for long no Macgregor would cross after nightfall the stream in that “ Glen of Sorrow,” believed to be

The Highlands and Islands

haunted by the ghosts of the victims. It is in print, though I cannot find any authority of weight, that up to the middle of the eighteenth century the Dumbarton schoolboys annually went through a ceremony of funeral rites on what was taken for the anniversary of the massacre, their *dux* being laid on a bier and with Gaelic chants carried to an open grave as effigy of those luckless predecessors.

The story of the scholars may have been exaggerated. But when eleven score widows of the slain Colquhouns, dressed in black on white palfreys, each bearing her husband's bloody shirt on a spear, came before James demanding vengeance, this object-lesson deeply moved the pacific king. The very name of Macgregor was proscribed on pain of death. The clan was handed over to the Campbells for execution; and when its chief surrendered to Argyll on promise of escaping with exile, this condition was kept to the letter by sending him over the English border and at once bringing him back to be hanged at Edinburgh. Throughout the century, acts of proscription against the Macgregors were repeatedly renewed, most of them having to disguise themselves as Campbells, Drummonds, Murrays, or other neighbour names, while one branch, settled in Aberdeenshire, took that of Gregory, and some wandered north as far as Ross. The bulk of their lands passed to the Campbells. But still a tough stock of them held fast near their old seats, not to be rooted out by all the power of the crown or of the Campbells, as we know from Rob Roy's exploits, who, "ower bad

“To the Highlands Bound”

for blessing, and ower good for banning,” hardly played the hero in the political strife of his day, but did a good deal of doughty fighting for his own hand.

This last of semi-mythical heroes had come to look on Argyll as a protector, and turned his depredations chiefly against the house of Graham ; whereas in the former century many of the clan had followed Montrose, which was worth to them the favour of Charles abolishing the penal laws against their name, afterwards re-enacted under William. It was not till George III.’s reign, when the tamed Macgregors had amply proved their loyalty in arms as well as their ability in other walks of life, that their proscription was finally annulled, the scattered clan free to take their own name, for which they recognised Sir John Murray as chief, in a deed signed by over 800 Macgregors. Rob Roy had represented the junior branch of Glengyle, claiming descent from that ruffian on whom was laid the blood of the Dumbarton scholars. Rob appears to have died a Catholic ; but a contemporary divine of his clan tells how they were in the way of boasting that they had a religion of their own, “neither Papist nor Protestant, just Macgregors !” So much for a stock that seems to have been more unlucky but not more undeserving, perhaps, than its neighbours.

In the Macgregor country the L.M.S. line crosses its rival the London N.E. Railway, that from Helensburgh turns northward up the shores of Loch Long and Loch Lomond to mount into the wilds of Perthshire, the great Caledonian Forest of old, still

The Highlands and Islands

showing a wide waste, the Moor of Rannoch, about which lay hid Charles Edward in fact, as Stevenson's David Balfour in fiction slunk before the redcoat dragoons over that naked moorland, crawling on all fours from patch to patch of heather among its moss bogs and peaty pools. Above the loftiest point of the line stands a shooting-lodge which used to boast itself the highest habitation in Britain, but has been far overtopped by the Observatory on Ben Nevis, round whose snow-streaked flanks the railway turns west at Fort-William towards its terminus on the coast.

This is bound to be a somewhat flat chapter, in which one can merely hint at the landmarks of rapid routes to the Inner Highlands, most of them by scenery already traversed in *Bonnie Scotland*. From Ben Nevis there is a straight way to Inverness by the bed of the Caledonian Canal. To that "capital of the Highlands," the high-road from the centre of Scotland is by the famed Highland (now L.M.S.) Railway over the wilds of Atholl and Badenoch; other lines lead less directly from the south. The L.M.S. through Strathmore, and the London N.E. over the Firths of Forth and Tay, unite to reach Aberdeen by the rocky coast on which stands out Dunottar Castle, that old Scottish Gibraltar, honoured with the custody of the Regalia, and accursed by the cruel confinement of Covenanters. At Aberdeen, close to the rounded and trimmed beauties of Deeside, avenue for Balmoral and Braemar, one has a choice of routes to Inverness, over a fine half-Highland, half-Lowland country, or along the rocky coast of the Moray Firth.



BALMORAL CASTLE.

“To the Highlands Bound”

From Inverness a single line runs on to the far north, with a branch to the ferries of Skye, rivalled now by the London N.E. extension to Mallaig. Half a century ago Dean Stanley declared it easier to get to Jerusalem than to Skye. Jerusalem to-day has its railway; while Skye is reached by steamers from Oban, besides the easy crossings for which cyclists wind upon good roads through the bens and glens beyond Inverness.

Oban, Fort-William, and Inverness are the chief bases of West Highland touring. To Lorne and to Lochaber we shall return anon. Of Inverness, properly a Highland frontier city, if capital of the Highland Railway, enough has been said in my former volume; but here I would take the opportunity of correcting a slight anachronism by which I there spoke of Inverness Castle as used for a prison. I learn that within the last two or three years it has been freed from this degradation. The Highlands have not much need of prisons; the Fiji Islanders did not more quickly shift a character for fierce violence. But for whisky and political or religious agitation, there would be little need of police in this country. It is many a year since Highlanders were “justified.” During a late quarter of a century or so, some half-dozen executions have served all Scotland; and it is stated on good authority that not one of the criminals was of native blood or religion; indeed, sound Presbyterians have the satisfaction of noting—but let sleeping dogs lie!

Peacefulness and honesty were not always characteristic virtues of the Highlands; and even yet, now that

The Highlands and Islands

we are about to visit Donald in his native wilds, let us understand how, like the rest of us, he has his weak points as well as his strong ones, both of them sometimes exaggerated into a caricature as like the original as is the rigid Highlander of a snuff shop. His critics are apt to dwell on certain faults which may be often regarded as the seamy side of fine qualities that also distinguish him. His groundwork of laziness will be chequered by spells of energy and endurance. He may still put too much of the hard drudgery on women ; but he does not shrink from tasks of danger and death. His want of smart practical turn goes with his readiness for romantic imaginings. His hot temper is related to a pride that begets chastity and courtesy as well as brawls. His loves as well as his hates catch fire more briskly than in the coarser Saxon nature, whose affections, indeed, if harder to kindle, may burn with an intenser glow when once well alight. The Lowlander is a better man of business, but the Highlander more of a gentleman, as the stranger will soon remark. And now that old feuds have smouldered out, the dourest Whig will not care to contradict a Tory poet—

Nowhere beats the heart so kindly
As beneath the tartan plaid.

All the same, Aytoun might have found cause to choose another epithet for Highland hearts, if, in those loyal old days of his, wearing a MacTavish plaid, let us say, he had chanced to forgather on some lonely moor with the tartans of “ ta Fairshon.”

CHAPTER II

TARTANS

FOREIGNERS who expect to find all Scotland lit by a sunset of romance, are disappointed in the paucity of kilts and plaids as touches of human colour upon the Highland scenery. The tartan, indeed, has gone out faster than some picturesque costumes of continental mountaineers. It was when forbidden to wear it that the thrawn Highlander clung fondly to his ancestral garb ; now that he has his choice, though he may keep a kilt and gay trappings to match for occasional display, he submits to the hodden grey breeches of the Saxon for work-a-day wear. In our time, indeed, aristocratic patronage has brought forth a holiday revival of the Highland dress. Queen Victoria's admiration set Braemar reblooming with rainbow shows ; and one Stuart peer of to-day is reported as offering a kilt of his tartan gratis to any clansman who will oblige him by displaying it. But these gauds are more visible on the edge of the Highlands than in their recesses ; least of all on the Islands, where men rather affect seafaring blue, and it is chiefly old women who cling to the tartan

The Highlands and Islands

shawl as head-dress. There may be more philabegs found in London than in Glasgow, or even in Inverness ; and in Lochaber or Badenoch you are less sure of encountering the tartan than on Surrey heaths about Aldershot, or in the Hertfordshire meadows near Watford, whither the Caledonian Asylum has now removed its company of young Highlanders, that till a year or so back flaunted themselves in the metropolis, exciting rude urchins to derisive cries of "Scotchie !" as in lowland Scottish towns they might be greeted with "Kiltie, kiltie, cauld legs !"

Those young Cockneys are as ignorant as some grown-up ladies and gentlemen and not a few authors, who ought to know that the "garb of old Gaul" is no more the "Scottish dress" than a tall hat and a red cloak is the English national costume for women. The comic papers caricaturing bank directors and church elders in tartans betray themselves as published within sound of Bow Bells. A London illustrated weekly once put Lanarkshire miners into kilts, as a patch of local colour. A few words, then, may not be wasted in enlightening popular ignorance on a subject that has some real obscurities to invite learned controversy among such pundits as concern themselves with "the cut of Adam's philabeg."

And first let me remonstrate with Friend Ezra Q. Broadbrim of Philadelphia and Miss Virginia M'Adam of Vermont, who profess to be as much shocked at bare knees as at the Apollo Belvidere or the Venus de Medici. A generation back England had a like squeamishness,

Tartans

when even on the northern stage Rob Roy and the Dougal Cratur felt it proper to wear tights ; nay, a century ago certain prim ladies of Edinburgh thought fit to publish in the *Courant* how they must avert their eyes from hairy-shanked cattle-drovers out of Highland glens. The example of our athletic youth has gone to shame down such mock modesty. As well be scandalised by the Scotch lasses who display their comely limbs in washing-tubs, not so liberally, indeed, as did their mothers, thanks to the leering of Cockney cads, who may be born at Paisley as at Peckham ! And let those who find the Highland dress too Arcadian know to their confounding that the Celt, whether of Scotland or Ireland, is a model for the Saxon in the morals that here seem open to question. As to healthfulness, the experience of Highland soldiers all over the world bears out Dr. Jaeger's doctrine of a thick girdle round the middle of the body being best for both hot and cold weather : the seat of life protected, and the extremities left to take care of themselves. There is a very Cockney novel of truly Cockney days, in which "Sir Gregor Macgregor, Cacique of Poyais," appears in the Fleet Prison wearing a snuff-shop kilt, as represented by the artist ; and a visitor judges it as well he can't go out, for fear of catching cold ! As to picturesqueness, ask any artist wrestling with his "Portrait of a Gentleman"—heaven help him if Mars or Minerva cannot cast some cloud over the lay figure draped by twentieth-century tailors !

The kilt is believed to be the oldest fashion of dress

The Highlands and Islands

in the world, the original material having been fig leaves, seaweeds, or such like. In the days of Roman power a full skirt was the badge of civilisation, distinguishing the *togati* from *braccati* barbarians. The whirligig of time was to bring about an exchange of fashion as to form ; but Pliny and other writers describe the Celts of classic days as arrayed in a kind of tartan. It may have been under some Epping Forest or Hampstead Heath check that Boadicea hid her stripes, "bleeding from the Roman rods." There is question as to if, when, or how far the old Highlanders gave up trews, tight-fitting hose all of a piece, for what seems to have been a single piece of rough cloth wrapped about the upper and belted about the lower part of the body. Bare legs was certainly the feature that three centuries ago put the nickname "Redshanks" on both Scottish and Irish kernes. A Norwegian king got at home the sobriquet of Magnus Barefoot when he brought back from the Hebrides a fashion of apparel he found there. On the other hand, there are parts of the Highlands where the kilt appears never to have become popular, while in some form or other the *breacan*, tartan, was everywhere worn by both sexes, the first patterns of which may have been suggested by varied hues of decay in Adam's leafy garment : Eve, no doubt, had a new one at frequent intervals from some Pandemoniac Paris.

The groundwork of ancient costume for Scottish and Irish Celts seems to have been a linen shirt dyed with saffron or smeared with pitch ; and perhaps the poorer class habitually wore little more, while the chieftains

Tartans

and their attendants learned from mailed foemen to use defensive armour. But what has come, rightly or wrongly, to be considered the characteristic dress of a Highlander was formerly the belted plaid, the lower part of it plaited in the manner of the kilt, the upper part capable of being folded round the body in various ways ; and hydropathists should be interested to know that to keep himself warm when sleeping on the open ground, the hardy clansman used to dip his loose wrapping in water. That story of the snowball pillow scouted as effeminate luxury, is told of several clans ; and Burt, early in the seventeenth century, reports the scorn of Highland women for a degenerate duinewassal who had donned a Lowland greatcoat. There could have been no want of tough hardiness about the men who, under Montrose, made marches of sixty miles a day by rough mountain paths.

By and by the idea would be hit on of separating body and skirt of an encumbering costume that, serving both for dress and blanket, had to be thrown off when it came to hot fighting or active business. Thus was developed the *philabeg* or little kilt which we know, in its present form vainly said to be the invention of an Englishman, even of an army-tailor, and, there is strange whisper, of some Quaker ! J. F. Campbell of Isla, Lord Archibald Campbell, and other writers make out, however, by help of old pictures and older sculptures, a very good case for antiquity both of the kilt and the diverse patterns of tartan. John Major, teacher of Knox and Buchanan, speaks of the "wild Scots" as

The Highlands and Islands

dressed in "patchwork," and going naked from mid-leg. A print in the British Museum shows kilts among the Scottish auxiliaries of Gustavus Adolphus. Sir R. M. Keith, in Frederick the Great's time, wrote home from Germany for "a plaid of my colours sewed and plaited on a waist belt . . . in which to show my nakedness to the best advantage"; but he does not use the name *kilt* for what in the army was at first an undress uniform. "Till he got his plaid kilted on him" took some time; and this phrase, used of one of the 1745 heroes, explains the name which Burt spelt *quelt*.

There need be little doubt that the costume would be modified to military exigencies on the raising of the Highland regiments between the rebellions of 1715 and 1745. The kilt of those days appears to have been more "cutty," giving greater freedom to the limbs than now, when it ought to touch the knee-cap, and its wet edge may cause sore rubs on unhardened skin, as poor John Brown found when, for once in a way, sent out walking in his philabeg livery. The sporran, used as a pouch, may originally have been an apron for decency's sake, and took its present showy form in military trappings. Rob Roy's is said to have been armed with a pistol that would go off in hands trying to open it without knowing the trick. A "snuff-mill" is mentioned as one of the appendages in Georgian days. The broad bonnet, apparently a Flemish importation, belonged to Lowland as well as Highland Scotland; its ornamental border of dice is said to come from the *fesse chequée* in the Stuart arms, and to have been intro-

Tartans

duced as a Cavalier distinction from the plain blue bonnets of the Roundheads. All over Scotland, too, was worn the plaid, now shrunk in military use to little more than an ornament of the "garb of old Gaul," but in its full size capable of mantling the body from head to heels. The ostrich plumes of Highland regiments are, of course, modern excrescences, yet developed from the feathers that marked the rank of chief and duinewassal. The ribbons behind the bonnet are vain survivals of appendages which had a practical use in tightening or loosening it, and might be drawn down as ear-flaps. But the clansmen of old time probably went bareheaded, as barefoot but for thin brogues of hide, that made no pretence of being waterproof, and soon wore out upon metalled roads. Your wild Highlandman was sure to carry a dirk, like a butcher's knife, with as many other lethal weapons as he could come by ; and if he had no buskins in which to stick his *skene-dhu*, he might keep it handy in his sleeve or a fold of his plaid. Silver buttons, Stewart of Garth says, were worn by those who had them, with the purpose of providing means for a decent funeral in very probable case of need. As to the gewgaws that now go with this dress, they must have been very exceptional when Burt describes a Highlander's plaid as commonly fastened by something like a fork or a skewer. The same writer dwells on bare limbs frequently disfigured by itch as a most unromantically displeasing feature of a costume which he, for his part, found "far from acceptable to the eye."

The Highlands and Islands

After Culloden, the wearing of the Highland dress was strictly prohibited, the clansmen stripped of their beloved tartans along with their arms. But it proved as ill to take the kilt as the breeks off a Highlander. This attempt against half-national sentiment only went to endear to the Celt his airy chequered garb; and the courts had to deal with knotty cases like that of a mountaineer who stitched up his kilt in the middle and pleaded that such a divided skirt met the requirements of the law. Likely young men caught in the kilt were handed over to the regiments in which they could wear it unblamed. There is one comic case of a negro lad taken up for displaying the tartan livery of his master, in which he may have resembled that battalion of Hindoo Highlanders whom the Gaekwar of Baroda provided with pink silk fleshings as groundwork for their exotic array. Perhaps *Humphrey Clinker* is not to be taken as a sober authority, on which we learn that when condemned to breeches by Act of Parliament, "the majority wear them, not in their proper places, but on poles, or long staves, over their shoulders." The law seems not to have been thoroughly enforced over the Highlands, and it became a dead letter before being repealed, when the Pretender took to swilling himself out of any risk of heroism. Now it's

Up wi' the bonny blue bonnet,
The kilt and the feather and a'!

But at that time the philabeg was as the smock frock of an English peasant. One would affectionately

Tartans

remonstrate with Mr. Neil Munro, who, in the seventeenth century, makes a gently-born hero "put on his kilt for town." A chief or gentleman commonly wore trews of tartan, as Prince Charlie did at Edinburgh, where on one occasion his "Highland garb" is reported as including "red velvet breeches"; and Waverley assumed the Highlander in trews to the approval of his mentor, the Baron of Bradwardine. Much farther back, for an excursion into the Highlands, "FitzJames" had equipped himself with three ells of Highland tartan at 4s. 4d. the ell, "to be hose to the king's grace"; and there is reason to suppose that the wearing of the trews was common in his day. In the same century we have a note of "breekis" supplied to Argyll's son, whose pedagogue seems to have gone gowned in a plaid, as became humbler station. A kilt, indeed, does not lend itself to horsemanship. The supporters of Highland coats of arms are sometimes represented as wearing one the kilt (occasionally marked as the "servile" dress), the other trews, which latter Mr. David MacRitchie (*Scottish Historical Review*, July 1904) insists on as the true form of Celtic garb, handed down from the most ancient times, and would have proud Sassenachs know that they took the use as the name of trousers from the race they despised as half naked. Quoting Defoe, who describes trews-wearing Highland soldiery as "like a regiment of merry Andrews ready for Bartholomew Fair," he boldly suggests that Harlequin may belong to the clan of Celtic jugglers. But this writer appears a true Celt in his love for lost causes

The Highlands and Islands

and costumes. When bayonets began to prick tartans, at all events, a belted plaid was the common wear of henchmen and gillies: in the Lowlander's eyes, as Macaulay says, the dress of a thief. And even a smart thief's sweetheart could boast of her Gilderoy—

He never wore a Hieland plaid,
But costly silken clothes !

Highlanders of rank living among their dependants would sometimes affect the popular garment, as an English squire may show himself in corduroys; and queer figures they would have cut to our eyes, when arrayed in what Boswell took for the true style of a Highland gentleman, "purple camlet kilt, a black waistcoat, a short green cloth coat bound with gold cord, a yellowish bushy wig, a large blue bonnet with a gold thread button." Even the clergy in the far north occasionally vested themselves in the philabeg; an Anglican bishop has struck Highlanders with surprise as one who superfluously wore both kilt and trews, though not in the blue and white pattern recognised as the clerical tartan.

In our time the fashion has swung round; and it is the Scottish aristocracy who now cherish a dress in which youngsters look so well, while unwise strangers too are tempted to bedeck themselves in such unfamiliar gauds. I shall never forget the figure an old friend of mine used to cut, who died a bearded Uhlan before the walls of Paris, but in youth was moved to assume grand-maternal tartans as setting for the typical aspect

Tartans

of a German student, round smooth face, gold spectacles, long straight hair, and all. I have seen an Italian prince, too, in this disguise, but thus he made no model for Salvator Rosa. If a foreigner take to the "garb of old Gaul," it is seldom he can live up to it. *Cucullus non facit monachum*. "The white-kneed Cockney, conscious of his kilt" may indeed be suspected half a mile off. ("How white your knees are!" a recent novelist makes one of his characters say admiringly to the hero in Highland dress.) I was about to lay it down that this "garment of terrible possibilities" cannot be worn becomingly without youthful usage; but I refrain on consideration that most of the soldiers who swing their tartans so bravely have been fettered in breeks till they took the king's shilling.

To its military renown we mainly owe the preservation of the Highland dress; but our kilted campaigners in India and Africa are not, as a rule, men of the same breeding as those whose martial virtues were first enlisted on the side of loyalty and order. No common soldiers were the privates, some of whom rode to drill attended by a gillie to carry their arms and uniforms. All of them would be fellow-clansmen or belonging to the same district, serving under their natural chiefs, and forming a happy regimental family, easily disciplined by leaders who understood their manners and would humour their sensibilities. They had the name of being "lambs in the house as lions in the field"; welcomed after experience by poor folk upon whom they came to be quartered, who at first might have shrunk from them

The Highlands and Islands

as half-naked Scythians. Stewart of Garth, himself an officer in the Black Watch, is most emphatic as to the good conduct of this regiment, among whom for many years the lash was never used, as it was daily in other corps. At a general punishment parade the Highlanders would be excused from attendance, such an example being held needless for them. When one of them did at last come under the cat, he was banned by his fellows as plague-stricken ; and the men, we are told, would sometimes subscribe to buy out a bad character, lest he should bring disgrace upon his company. These stern warriors feared above all a threat to tell of their misconduct at home. Out of their sixpence a day they, in at least one case, joined to pay a chaplain of their own, organising themselves into a church with elders elected from the ranks. Not a few of them sent part of that poor pay home to the old people ; while others had sold their bodies to the king on condition of a farm lease given by the laird to the father they might never see again.

The Highlanders in those days were as noted for sobriety as for valour, declares General Stewart, in proof of which he asserts that when rum was served out on a campaign, the Highland soldiers alone could be trusted with three or four days' allowance at once, like officers. There is indeed reason to hold that the Highlands have not always deserved a name for intemperance. The former drink of the people was ale, if not water ; whisky does not figure in their ancient songs and proverbs, as does the Pictish "heather ale,"

Tartans

the secret of making which is long lost. With Pitt's excise laws, we are told, began the smuggling and illicit distillation that did so much to demoralise a race which, if all stories are true, has sadly fallen away from primitive virtue. So Stewart protests as to the temperance of the early Highland regiments; yet more critical observers in George I.'s reign speak of whisky houses as already a curse to the country from which those troops were raised; and indeed all travellers of that date who got themselves into print are apt to touch on a habit of "correcting" or "qualifying" the rawness of Highland air, where a funeral, as well as a feast, was like to end in a drunken fray, when dirks served for forks.

General Stewart, it must be confessed, looked back on the Highlands through a haze of full-dress tartan, glittering with silver settings and jewelled memories! One can excuse this Gael for a little idealising the memory of his fathers in arms. He admits that the first Highland soldiers had some military failings, especially from the martinet's point of view. They could be led, but not driven. Like Red Indian warriors, they took the warpath eagerly, but thought no shame of dropping off at their own whim or convenience. Like Swiss mercenaries, they often suffered acutely from *Heimweh*, drawing them back to their beloved mountains. Desertions were frequent in early days, till the clansmen had learned what it was to be soldiers. The wonder is they were not more frequent among soldiers often enlisted by pressgang methods. The discontents which

The Highlands and Islands

repeatedly drove them into open mutinies were bred out of misunderstandings, either on the part of men whose ignorance of English blinded them to the nature of their engagement, or of officers who could not make allowance for their susceptible character ; and they had real grievances in the bad faith of the Government when they found themselves ordered abroad or drafted into other regiments, contrary to the terms of their enlistment.

The 42nd—originally the 43rd—Regiment was first formed out of the companies of the Black Watch in 1739. Three years later they were marched into England, to their surprise and suspicion, soothed by a representation that the king wished to see the finest regiment in his service. Over the border they found themselves regarded with such curiosity as to-day would be excited by the sight of our Maori or Sikh auxiliaries ; then their good conduct and imposing array were worth a friendly reception, that for a time lulled their distrust. But this awoke again in London, where rumours ran that they had been decoyed so far to be transported to the American plantations ; and the Cockneys of that day, as well as the clowns of southern counties, seem to have been more inclined to coarse jests than the northern English, who had better cause for respecting the wild Highlandmen. Traitors were also at work among them, putting into their heads the idea that “after being used as rods to scourge their countrymen, they were to be thrown into the fire.”

Having been reviewed on Finchley Common by



CAWDOR CASTLE.

Tartans

Marshal Wade, the regiment gave itself leave to start bodily homewards, under the leadership of a Macpherson corporal, taking a line across country between the two great north roads, and dodging from wood to wood, so that for two or three days their march could not be traced by the amazed authorities. In a wood a few miles from Oundle they were intercepted and surrounded by a force from Northampton ; then, no doubt half-starved and much bewildered, after some parley they surrendered. Three men were shot as an example in the Tower. The rest let themselves be shipped over to Flanders for a baptism of foreign fire at Fontenoy, where their conduct proved so excellent that they were trusted with the service of covering the retreat. After 1746 they had a long term of exile, from which, out of more than a thousand, not a hundred men came back to their native heath. Ever since—

We have sailed owre many a sea, my lad,
We have fought 'neath many a sky ;
And it's where the fight has hottest raged
That the tartans thickest lie.

The Highland regiments grew used to getting more than their fair share of foreign service ; but for long their fiery spirits were apt to flare up into mutiny against real or imaginary injustice. After such risings, when it was thought necessary to make an example, men would come forward to offer themselves for trial and punishment as scapegoats. Stewart tells a story of one private, marched to Edinburgh to be tried for his life, who got leave of his officer to turn aside alone

The Highlands and Islands

to Glasgow for the settlement of important business, and, true to his word, made a dramatic appearance at the last moment among his fellow-prisoners, having struggled with accidental delays like the hero of Schiller's *Bürgschaft*.

It was vulgar crime that appears to have been almost unknown among these touchy braves, whose virtues and failings remind us of honourable schoolboys. By tens of thousands such men laid their bones all over the world to pave the British Empire. Till the end of the century fresh regiments could be raised from the Highlands, as well as corps of Fencible militia and volunteers. The drain of the long French war first made the supply run short. The ranks of the Highland regiments began to be recruited from outside, from the scum of London and Dublin, as Stewart bitterly complains; and this alloy went far to debase their early character. There are too few real Highlanders in the ranks since the glens from which they were recruited have been stocked with sheep and deer in place of men. The Celt seems to have much lost his martial ardour, now that other careers are open to him. In our day recruits have actually been rejected from the Black Watch because they could speak nothing but Gaelic, or perhaps as showing too much of the ancestral grudge against discipline.

Of late years more care has been taken to give Scotsmen only the privilege of serving in regiments for which recruits would willingly come forward from all parts of the kingdom. The majority of "Highland"

Tartans

soldiers are at least Lowland Scots, and some battalions have a considerable percentage of real Highlanders, which will be much larger in the militia contingent. But, as General Stewart noticed, Sassenachs, Irishmen, Cockneys, and other aliens soon catch the infection of enthusiasm for tartans, bagpipes, and the proud traditions of regiments that are the Zouaves or Bersaglieri of our service. They have lost, indeed, the old bonds of caste and custom that held them closely together, for good and evil, like the Brahmin sepoy who stirred mutiny in our Indian army. But still *esprit de corps* is strong enough in regiments to make them jealously loyal to their own special uniform. In the South African war they needed more than one order to make them hide their showy tartan by a khaki apron worn in front: the other side an enemy is not expected to see. And when prosaic War Office authorities talked of smudging all the bright stripes and checks into some such plain dull tint as a less striking mark for Boer rifles, the *veldt* "heather was on fire" with wrath of Seaforth and Gordon Highlanders who could not tell you where Seaforth is, or how the Gay Gordons came to have to do with the Highlands. To reconcile this sentiment with practical exigencies, a Scottish artist has lately been at work designing tartans that will preserve the distinctive check in a low-toned scheme of colour. This would be but a development of the old practice, which in several cases distinguished a showy design for full dress from the less *voyant* effect of the clan's hunting tartan.

The Highlands and Islands

It must be remembered that only in recent days has the Highlander, like the Red Indian, become an abstract personage. The sentiment of Highland soldiery was originally a more concrete one. They had faint idea of general patriotism, and their loyalty was not so much to their race as to their own chiefs and kin. The first bodies raised in the reign of King William were largely Campbells and other loyal clans ; but after the rising of 1715 they were disbanded as of doubtful trustworthiness. On the representation of General Wade and other officers, however, the experiment was again tried of keeping the peace of the Highlands by independent companies, on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief. Contemporary scandal-mongers even hinted that these watchmen took turns of stealing and retrieving, so as to earn the old suspicion against *custodes ipsos*. Each company would wear the tartan of its captain, and be largely made up of his clansmen or dependants, who conceived a new respect for law when it set them in arms against their hereditary enemies. One captain was charged with stripping his tenants of their best plaids for the soldiers to cut a gallant figure in on parade occasions.

When these companies came to be embodied as a regular regiment, the question of uniform made a sore point among men of different clans. To meet this difficulty the dark neutral Black Watch tartan is said to have been devised, which forms the groundwork of several others ; but it is also claimed as one of the Campbell patterns, and half the original captains



Tartans

belonged to that clan, foremost in furnishing soldiers to guard Whig thrones. There were Highlanders of that day who would as soon have worn a shirt of Nessus as Argyll's trappings. Later corps, raised by noblemen in their own country, naturally took the tartan of their chiefs, whose names and colours are preserved in our modern regiments, when Gordon and Cameron Highlanders are as like to be Smiths and Robertsons. The grey kilting of the London Scottish corps seems related to the fact that no clan tartan would be generally acceptable to Highlanders of Hampstead, Highgate, and Hammersmith, few of whom could pass a searching examination in tartanology.

Even ardent Celtic eyes, military or civilian, of our generation might well be dazzled into confusing the brilliant array of Macdougalls and Macdonalds, of Macleods and Macmillans; and it is not only the Sassenach who needs the help of an illustrated dictionary for distinguishing between some hundred recognised patterns, many of them differing only by a shade, or a thin stripe of colour. Some clans, as the Campbells and the Macdonalds, split into several branches, have as many tartans, for the most part bearing a general resemblance, yet to be recognised by an expert. Some give themselves the luxury of different sets, one for full dress, another worn only by the chief and his family. There is reason to understand that in old days a greater variety of colours was displayed by the rich, while the poor had to be content with simpler designs. Some patterns seem to be of no small antiquity, handed down

The Highlands and Islands

like the wampum records of a Red Indian tribe ; others may have been modified by circumstances or designed in rivalry to those of neighbouring clans. Certain of the best-known clans, the Gordons and the Grahams, for instance, came from the Lowlands, and would have to equip themselves with a becoming tartan, as has been done for Douglasses and Dundases in quite modern times. Certain tartans displayed in shop windows are undoubtedly of recent sartorial origin. That now worn by the Cameron Highlanders was a blend designed for the sake of harmony with King George's red coat. The older patterns perhaps depended on knowledge of or access to the natural dyes used in them, got from heather, broom, roots, barks, seaweeds, or what not. Perhaps they were coloured to some extent by defiance to hereditary enemies, as in the case of the Campbell greens and the Cameron reds, contrasting like the tints of Rembrandt and of Botticelli. The hue would often be suggested by the need of slinking unseen upon sly game, over braes of turf and heather ; old writers indeed describe the general effect of tartan as brown or heathery ; and more glaring patterns could not have been for everyday wear.

Highland as indeed Lowland kindreds also affected the wearing of some plant in their caps, as the holly of Avenel, the thistle of Stewart,¹ the broom of Forbes,

¹ One story of how this became the badge of Scotland suggests the geese of the Roman Capitol : A Dane, moving stealthily to the attack of some Scottish stronghold, trod in the dark upon a thistle, pricking out of him a cry that alarmed the garrison.

Tartans

the sprig of fir, box, or heath that is the common badge of so many clans that it was only among near neighbours it could make a mark of distrust or defiance. Another token was the slogan or rallying-cry of the clan, often the name of some mountain or conspicuous rock in its country, as "Cruachan" was for the Macintyres and came to be for the conquering Campbells. There were further peculiarities which the Gael could interpret as easily as a Mohawk read the "sign" of Huron or of Delaware. But long before coming near enough to excite the war-cry of his foes, the keen-eyed Highlander might make out the hue of their tartans, warning him to be prepared for fight or flight, as the case might be, when the strangers were not of a friendly name. The Maclean reds and the Macleod yellows were like a danger signal on each side. It was not so, indeed, with all neighbours, which is almost as much as to say enemies. The Forbeses and the Gordons, once living beside each other on cat-and-dog terms, have tartans ill distinguished in general effect, by a thin line in the one case of white, in the other of yellow, which it would take a very sharp-sighted scout to pick out at musket range.

One might suppose those old feuds quite forgotten in our days, but I can quote a curious instance to the contrary. The tartan I have any right to is that of Forbes, in which I went bedecked when I wore what Wordsworth quite ultroneously belittles as—

The Roman kilt, degraded to a toy
Of quaint apparel for a half-spoilt boy.

The Highlands and Islands

“Half-spoilt” boy, quotha! I conceit myself, for one, brought up in more decency and order than the poet who ran so wild on Cumberland fells, wearing out his corduroys in nut-brakes, or unblushingly bare even of “cast-off weeds” when he made “one long bathing of a summer’s day.” The matter in hand is that at a more prudent stage of life, to save myself from being “half-spoilt” by a cold journey “on an itinerant vehicle,” I addressed myself to buy a plaid, Forbes tartan of course, but not finding one thick enough in the shop, I humbled my ancestral pride to put up with the Gordon pattern. This I did on two considerations : first, that the objectionable yellow should in time bleach itself to lambliness ; second, that the ignorant natives of the country in which I mainly live would not know the difference. But after exposure to wind and rain for a generation, the hateful hue is as bright as ever ; then one day in an hotel ’bus, at Bournemouth of all places in the world, I had as companions two elderly ladies who kept looking grimly askance at that perverted tartan of mine.

“Sir,” said one of them abruptly, “I hope you’re not a Gordon.”—“Certainly not,” replied I, somewhat taken aback ; “but why ?”—“Because our people don’t like the Gordons !” quoth this frowning dame ; “we are Forbeses !” Shamedly I made confession of my fault, declaring how, in spite of appearances, I too boasted that choicest Highland descent ; but my kinswomen heard me in the stony silence due to a pretended Forbes in Gordon trappings.

Tartans

Hereditary instincts awoke in me to lighten up their natural resentment. I myself would think kindly of these unfortunate Gordons, and speak of them with subdued reprobation, as becomes a son of the nineteenth century. I feel no lust to lift from them a single head of cattle, however come by, nor to strip them of any tatter of character that may hang about their deplorable history. I strive to take a fair view of them as fellow-men, and would fain disguise their badges of infamy in the Perth dyeworks. Yet a candid spirit might well ask whether no critical commentator have shown cause to suspect that the enemy of mankind made his first *creagh* against our happiness arrayed in the Gordon tartan, its livid stripes on a green background readily suggesting that allegory of a serpent form. The white lines of my tartan are rather to be taken for traces of primitive innocence, as even a Gordon must admit; and the dourest Forbes may agree that all offence of the hostile colours has long been washed in brave blood.

The clannishness, which is the obverse of such inter-tribal grudges, has not yet died out, albeit on the Stock Exchange a Macgregor makes no better price for a Vich-Alpine than for a son of Somerled. In certain secluded glens and islands is still rooted a minor patriotism which does not wholly wither under the suns of the open world. "A' Stewarts are no sib to the king!" is the semi-Sassenach's sneer at distant calling of cousins between crofter and chieftain; yet his cherished memories of descent go far to make the poorest Highlander something of a gentleman. Nor is

The Highlands and Islands

stretching out of the ties of kindred all upon the inferior side. At least it will be only in recent times that the Highland chief takes shame for his poor relations, who still may keep some rags of the old loyalty. If you ask an English Brown whether he be connected with a namesake, his first impulse is usually towards emphatic denial, especially if he be in a condition to shun "brutes that use the wrong kind of soap." But the M'Brown is more apt to think twice before repudiating any claim of far-off kinship, a fact cynically explained by conditions, lasting longer in the north than in the south, under which the greatest man's life and property were safe in proportion to the prevalence of his name and blood. It is not so long ago since a Highlander had such a practical as well as a sentimental interest in seeing about him none but his own tartan.

CHAPTER III

THE LAND OF LORNE

AMONG all the clans, the most numerous and the most powerful, in modern times, have been the Campbells, who rose on the wreck of the once predominant Macdonalds, ousting and absorbing men of other less auspicious names till the new lords were firmly seated over Argyll and a large part of Perthshire. This prosperity they owed to a knack of choosing the stronger side, whereas Highlanders have been more apt to figure as champions of falling causes. While less practically-minded stocks stood "agin the government," the Campbells usually proved ready to recognise *de facto* authority, to catch the flowing tide of fortune, and to turn even godliness to gain in a manner supposed to be more characteristic of the Lowland Scot. But the canniest of clans had better success in earning fear than love from their neighbours. The wilder chiefs looked on Argyll as an obnoxious good boy who pulled out plums for himself from their seething confusion. Their Jacobite sentiments came in part from an ancient respect for hereditary right, in part from preference for a

The Highlands and Islands

sovereign in no position to enforce obedience; but often it was as much hatred of the Macallum More as love of the Stuarts that drove Lochiels and Clanranalds into unprofitable rebellion. "Fair and false as a Campbell!" is the reproach of sufferers from that pushful race that, to threats and curses, gave back their chuckling byword, "It's a far cry to Loch Awe!" Jacobite poets are of course very bitter against the line "of him who sold his king for gold"; and when the cottar goodman had "waled a portion" enumerating Job's sheep and camels, his wife might well opine, "Maybe no the same Cam'ells as at Inveraray, or I doobt there'd no be mony o' the sheep left." But in the teeth of all ill-will, "the Campbells are coming!" was the word for centuries, during which they went on serving themselves heirs to the domains of the shadowy Prince Lorne, and supplanting the sons of Somerled, more authentic Lords of the Isles. They were, in short, one of the first clans to be civilised.

I was at school with sons of this house, who were fair but not false; and if its recent head robbed me of an expected prize, that was through the Campbell virtue of taking the likeliest means to attain an end. The then Duke himself once attended our prize-day Exhibition, when at the last moment it was well remembered to substitute "Wolsey, I did not think to shed a tear!" or some such stock piece of inoffensive declamation, for Aytoun's "Burial March of Dundee," in which a budding Demosthenes had else reviled to their faces "the brood of false Argyle." So the name



INVERARAY CASTLE AND CROSS.

The Land of Lorne

was commonly spelt in my days of spelling ; but the fashion now changes it to Argyll.

My own great-grandfather was born at Craignish, and it is not for me to speak ill of his mother's roof-tree. But if truth must be told, antipathy to the modern lords of Lorne has not been confined to alien clans. At school with us was another crew of Campbells, that prided themselves on having kept their independence of the ducal chief, their shrunken lands islanded amid his domain. They had some story which I half forget, of ancestral charters hid away safe in a tree, when their grasping overlord got into his possession those of other Campbells. What I remember noting on a holiday visit was how these boys had been taught not to pass the duke's march without throwing a stone in sign of undying enmity to the house of Argyll, a pious duty that would come easy to boys in all times, but in our degenerate age was performed with careless good-humour, none of these young mountain-cats being conscious of any personal animosity. Old and new ways of life are mingled in another story of stones which I vaguely recall from a western glen. A Campbell had killed a Cameron—or it may have been the other way on—to whose memorial cairn every passing Cameron added a stone of remembrance, religiously pulled down by every Campbell. Thus the cairn stood waxing and waning by a lonely moorside track, till a Campbell was appointed postman on the beat, and his daily passage gave the monument no fair chance.

The cradle of this race, so far as it is known to

The Highlands and Islands

history, seems to have been the Loch Awe valley below Ben Cruachan and the eastward ridges about Loch Long, where the "Cobbler" had once for more poetic name "Arthur's Seat," and a rocky peninsula became playfully styled "Argyll's Bowling-Green." This country is as rich in romantic associations as in natural beauty, famed by pen and pencil, chiefly perhaps through P. G. Hamerton's *Painter's Camp in the Highlands*, when with his faithful "Thursday" he took up Crusoe quarters on one of the Loch Awe islands, before the solitude of its tombs was invaded by steamboats and hotels. His readers will remember how he revels in the colouring of these "changeful landscapes," the greens and golds against a background of rich heather, the velvet purples richer than any king's mantle, the rocks "plated" with thin snow, the patches of blood-red fern in autumn, the masses of sun-lit snow in winter, the stretches of calm lake reflecting green mountain slopes and tufted islets, "the delicate half calms just dulled over with faint breathings of the evening air," the threads of fire which sunset shoots between masses variously rippled that give the water a tartan pattern of crimson, grey, and violet; the kaleidoscopic effects of sun and wind; the azure blue of the distances, the pearly grey of rising clouds, the Titianesque masses of evening gloom, the invisible vapours that even in bright sunshine soften the outlines of crest and ridge.

The type of the most enjoyable Highland weather (says our connoisseur in land and water scenery) is this:—The

The Land of Lorne

mountains in their own local colour, not much altered by the effect ; green for the most part, and scarred with reddish, or purplish, or grey rocks, all outlines soft and tender and vague, still perfectly well defined even in their softness. The sky, a very pale lovely blue, delicately graduated ; the water, if under a pleasant sailing-breeze, as intensely blue as ultramarine can get it, yet a very deep colour, not to be got out of ultramarine alone, because there are purplish browns in it produced by the play of the dark brown water with the azure sky-reflections. Lastly, if the wind freshens, all this dark blue will be flecked with snowy crests of breakers. Highland scenery is never so *lovely* as under this aspect.

Too often, indeed, these enchanting hues are buried in mists through which it takes a painter's eye to detect glimpses of grandeur or beauty. Mrs. Hamerton, for her part, fresh from the sunny skies of France, admits that the health of both suffered in the depressing winter, "when the wind howls so piteously in the twisted branches of the Scotch firs, and when the rain imprisons one for weeks within liquid walls of unrelieved grey-ness." But her husband can tell how sometimes this valley may be baked by sunshine for weeks and months together, till relief comes in a cloud-burst like that of the Indian monsoon, such as he once beheld from the top of Ben Cruachan, overwhelming what Christopher North held dearest of Scottish lakes — "mountain-crowned, cliff-guarded, isle-zoned, grove-girdled, wide-winding and far-stretching, with the many-bayed banks and braes of brushwood, fern, broom, and heather, . . . thou glory of Argyleshire, rill-and-river fed, sea-arm-like, floating in thy majesty, magnificent Loch Awe !"

The Highlands and Islands

Hamerton was a poet as well as a painter, who in his *Isles of Loch Awe* has pictured the legends that take shape in such scenes. The most striking of these is that of Inis Fraoch, a Celtic version of the Hesperides story, with a modern love interest and a tragic ending. The Hercules task imposed upon the young hero Fraoch, according to one variant by his lady-love, but a more dramatic form gives this part to a jealous rival, is to fetch from the island golden apples growing there under charge of a dragon whose poisonous fangs do him to death, and the fair-seeming fruit proves no less fatal to the maid, or else she is made to die of grief. Another world-wide fancy ascribes the origin of the lake to the heedlessness of a virgin who, overcome by sleep, neglected her nightly task of sealing up a mystic fountain on Ben Cruachan. A romantic tale, echoing from classical story and from the banks of the Rhine, brings us into the Campbell traditions at Kilchurn Castle. Seven years had its crusading knight been absent, when in beggar's rags, like Ulysses, he came home to find his wife on the point of being forced into a hateful re-marriage. The strange wedding guest begs a cup of wine at her hands, and when he gives it back empty, the lady sees at the bottom a ring which she recognises sooner than she does her husband, who then has no difficulty in disposing of the insolent suitor. A truly practical feature is that this Scottish Penelope's task, through those long seven years, had been no futile weaving and unweaving, but the building of that sturdy pile that inspired Wordsworth's muse as well as



The Land of Lorne

Hamerton's, and gave a hint for eerie fiction in Mrs. Oliphant's novel *The Wizard's Son*, as previously it seems to have sat to Scott in his *Legend of Montrose*.

The descendants of that crusader spread northwards, displacing the Macgregors of Glenorchy, and founding the lordship of Breadalbane in Perthshire. Another cadet branch moved still farther north, long after Macbeth's time, to become Earls of Cawdor through one of those profitable marriages that have been a Campbell custom. But the main stock is the house of Argyll, which from obscure petty chieftainship rose to command five thousand claymores in 1745. Not that all the Campbells always stood shoulder to shoulder, as in 1715 Breadalbane's men fought for the Pretender, while Argyll led the bulk of his clan for King George.

One might as well undertake the census of a hornets' nest as dogmatise on the descent of a Highland clan. The Argyll house, backed by antiquaries like Skene, now repudiate the legend of a Norman adventurer, "De Campo Bello" or Beauchamp, as having wed an heiress of Loch Awe, though this origin would be quite in keeping with the family traditions. A much more ancient source is claimed for them as descendants of King Arthur, or of Diarmid, hero of Fingalian epics, a descent that might make them akin to the Irish Dermotts. The name Campbell is said to mean "Wry-mouth," as Cameron "Crooked-nose," from the same root as appears in our winding Cam rivers. About the time of the last Norwegian invasion under Haco, the

The Highlands and Islands

clan comes to dim light in two branches, the elder Macarthurs, the younger the sons of Colin or Calain, a name perverted into MacCallum. The elder branch went under, their tombs still to be seen on an island of Loch Awe. The younger rose through marriage with a sister of Robert Bruce, and through fighting for him against the Macdougalls of Lorne. The confirmation of his sovereignty advanced this chief over confiscated estates of their common foes. For generations a run of luck or policy kept increasing the Campbells' domain till they were lords of all Argyll and part of the Islands, the conquered clans, if not exterminated or driven away, being forced to take their name, as a Red Indian tribe has often recruited itself by adoption of its prisoners or subjects. When the elder Macarthurs were condemned as traitors under James I., the sons of Colin basked in royal favour, and in the next reign the usurping chief accepted a feudal lordship, which before long grew into the Earldom of Argyll. Thenceforth they went on rising in the world, by cunning and unscrupulousness, as their enemies put it, by prudence and enterprise, as their friends say.

The Campbells generally stood on the side of law and progress, the winning side in the long run ; and it must not be forgotten how they gave their quota of martyrs to the new religious spirit that has done so much to tame the Highlands. It does not appear that they were more ruthless than their neighbours, but more considerate and more lucky. It may be that the dark hue of their tartans, blending with the green hills

The Land of Lorne

and grey skies of Lorne, gave some help to their survival as fittest in the Highland struggle for existence ; while at court their lords practised an art of mimicry that did not go the length of neglecting the interests of Scotland when these came to be threatened by English statesmen.

The worst thing that has been said about this clan is that they played police for the throne with a clear eye to profit, and were too ready to root out their own turbulent enemies in the name of law, their chiefs even accused of instigating rebellions which they themselves would be called on to suppress for a consideration. As far off as the "bonnie house of Airlie" the Campbells pushed their fire-and-sword process. Many an execution carried by them among the king's rebels is well forgotten ; but one is still remembered that brought the atrocities of romantic times almost down to newspaper days. From Ballachulish and the slate quarries of Loch Leven all the tourists take coach up Glencoe, catching a glimpse of austere wilds rightly known only to those who wander on foot under the shadow of its stern "Sisters" and the "Shepherds" of Loch Etive. For Ossian there could be no fitter birthplace than this darkly famed glen. Its serrated and bristling walls "have a barren strength and steepness which remind one continually of the stone buttresses of Sinai" ; yet the sunlight shows weird Arabesque colourings of purple, green, and pink, often dulled beneath a pall that seems nature's mourning for the tragedy here commemorated by a cross, and its scene still traced out

The Highlands and Islands

by patches of green round the site of ruined huts. "Even with sunshine," Macaulay found this "the very valley of the shadow of death."

The story of the Glencoe massacre is renowned among many such deeds of cruelty which have stained the heather ; but it is not always recognised how far this was a slaughter of Macdonalds by their hereditary enemies the Campbells, acting under legal authority. Historians variously apportion the guilt between the Earl of Breadalbane and the Master of Stair, a minister who had the art to make King William accomplice in the vindictive design. The innocence of the victims has been unduly heightened for the sake of dramatic effect ; and patriotic rage has blindly charged the bloodshed upon English soldiers. The MacIain Macdonalds of Glencoe were a band of sturdy cattle-thieves who, like other Highland heroes of old, naturally lived in bad blood with their neighbours ; and an attempt to harry their fastness might have passed as a fair exploit if not carried out with so base treachery. Heavy winter snows having delayed the chieftain from bringing in his submission to the Government by a fixed date, he was yet given to believe it accepted. A detachment of Argyll's regiment entered the glen under pretence of friendship, and were received with Highland hospitality, their commander, Campbell of Glenlyon, being connected with the Macdonalds by marriage. This worthy is said to have played at cards with the sons of the chieftain whom he had orders to murder next morning, at which time every way of escape from the glen



OCEAN BAY AT NIGHT.

The Land of Lorne

should be closed by several companies marching up under his superior officer.

Before dawn of a winter morning the slaughter began with shooting down the old chieftain at his bedside, his wife being so brutally ill-used that she died next day. Similar scenes took place in the other homes that had unsuspectingly received such guests. The story goes that the soldiers had been loth to do their part in the butchery, but, once it was on foot, they appear to have worked themselves up into a fury of bloodshed, going even beyond their commission in killing children and infirm elders. The Macdonalds, having hidden away their arms after the submission, doubtless in hope to fight another day, found themselves in no state to offer resistance. Scattered and surprised, they were shot down like sheep, wherever the alarm did not warn them to escape. After all, the plan of extirpation failed. Nearly forty men were slain; but a larger number got away, with women and children, some of them to perish in a snowstorm, which also saved many hardy Highlanders, as veiling their flight and hindering the march of the force that should have closed the passes on that woeful morning. Their homes were burned, and from the glen were driven away five hundred horses, three times as many cows, and large flocks of sheep and goats, cattle which the Macdonalds may have come by in much the same violent manner.

Glencoe has now passed into the hands of a Canadian peer, a chief of the great British clan Smith. Till lately its sheep-walks still belonged to Macdonalds whom I

The Highlands and Islands

knew in my youth. When news came from India that one of this line had got into trouble through killing a native, a neighbour of ours sapiently remarked, "The old massacre blood coming out!" which seemed a confusion of active and passive. A most efficient curse was that laid on the leader of the slaughterers, whose descendants are understood to be conscious of it to this day. There is a famous story, told in various forms, of one Campbell of Glenlyon, on whom fell the duty of producing at the last moment a reprieve for a condemned soldier. But in taking the paper from his pocket he unwittingly pulled out the white handkerchief that was to be signal to the firing party. Next moment the criminal lay dead, and the unhappy officer covered his eyes with a cry—"The curse of God and of Glencoe!" The brightest tradition relating to Glencoe is that noted by Scott, how when Prince Charlie's army marched by the house of Lord Stair it was thought well to place a guard over it against the vengeance of the Macdonalds, then the Glencoe chieftain proudly demanded for his own clansmen to prove their military honour by fulfilling this duty.

Glencoe, Ben Cruachan, and other outskirts of the Land of Lorne rank among the wildest scenes in Scotland. Loch Awe and Loch Etive are hardly surpassed in fame; and Loch Creran has been called "one of the loveliest and least known of Highland waters," as comes to be said of so many scenes beheld under congenial conditions. The general aspect of this region, however, seems a blending of true Highland and

The Land of Lorne

semi-Lowland, like the character and career of its lords. Robert Buchanan tells us how it is "fair and gentle, a green pastoral land, where the sheep bleat from a thousand hills, and the grey homestead stands in the midst of its own green fields, and the snug macadamised roads ramify in all directions from the tiny capital on the seaside, with the country carts bearing produce, the drouthy farmer trotting home at all hours on his sure-footed nag, and the stage coach, swift and gay, wakening up the echoes in summer time with the guard's cheery horn." Even its wilder nooks, as one can see from coach, railway, or steamer, have been much broken up as sites for mansions and villas, hotels and shooting-lodges; and in summer months farms and cottages in a hundred glens are packed tight with holiday-making families from the cities, whose seaside retreats threaten to turn the arms of the Clyde into a gigantic Venice.

Inveraray, of course, is the county capital, a big village picturesquely situated on a sea loch under the shade of lordly woods about the duke's castle, which in this century has for the first time undergone the indignity of being let to a Southron. An old school-fellow of mine was once sheriff here, who, to save himself from "eating his head off," used to walk across the country to hold his court at Dunoon, its biggest gathering of houses, best filled in summer. Campbeltown is the most thriving burgh of business. But to the world the most familiar name in Argyll is Oban, that international rendezvous showing as many

The Highlands and Islands

hotels as there are clans in the Highlands, and steam-boats more than might tow all the "lymphad" galleys of Argyll, overlooked from the heights above by two modern towers of Babel.

At Oban the *genius loci* seems too much exorcised by steam whistles, and by the mob of knickerbockered and waterproofed tourists comparing notes about their *tables d'hôte*. Few of these easy travellers find their way into Knapdale, that long parish forming the upper part of the Mull of Cantyre, which makes a characteristic stretch of this green Land of Lorne. Happy days have I spent in youth among its low hills, ten miles from the nearest steamboat pier or village. The name of the place I cannot trust myself to spell, nor could most of my readers pronounce it; but to me it meant paradise. It made the rough Tusculum of a great Lancashire cotton-spinner, his son a schoolfellow of mine. A moor rather than a mountain of the soft west, its strong point was as a fishing quarter, having two trout streams opening into a long winding estuary that looked out on the Paps of Jura and beyond across the wide Atlantic. How we lads splashed through water fresh and salt, in those "days by distance enchanted," when no-mist could cloud "the sunshine of the breast," when wet jackets and kilts seemed nothing but a joke, and one hardly cared to keep a shod foot in that damp wilderness! We did not enough appreciate our piscatorial blessings, where we might catch dozens of troutlings any idle afternoon, with the chance of a grilse or a yellow trout in the

The Land of Lorne

rivulet mouths, and deep-sea fishing in the loch, down to the butchery of lythe, which, trailing bright feathers on the coarsest tackle in the wake of the sunset, one hooked up as fast as they could be drawn into the boat, each as long as one's arm. How would Piscators of this generation prize such opportunities, now probably let at a pork-king's ransom !

One holiday visit stands out in memory, when my schoolfellow and I were lent the empty lodge, on condition of playing Robinson Crusoe for ourselves. What could be more inviting to youngsters than such a picnic ! We took down by steamer from Glasgow an enormous round of salt beef ; we laid in a stock of bread at the nearest shop, ten miles from our hermitage ; and on this plain fare, with what fish we could catch, we were prepared to live greatly independent. But the people of the hill farm close at hand would not indulge our Spartanhood. Daily they poured in upon us mutton, broth, bannocks, eggs, jam, honey, and what not, so that we were fed up like turkey-cocks ; and not a penny would the goodman take for his friendly entertainment. *En Écosse, l'hospitalité se donne* has often been quoted sneeringly ; but I can answer for its truth in Knapdale.

It was for the sake of my friend's father that we were so well treated, and those who knew him best will understand why ; but he did not command the approval of all that countryside. For one thing, he was a hardened "Erastian," if my readers know what that means. When the Free Church proposed to set up a tabernacle and applied to him for a subscription, he

The Highlands and Islands

growled out, "As soon as the parish church is full, I will build you a new one out of my own pocket—not a penny till then!" For Free Church students sent on awakening missions to those wilds, it was a daring adventure to tackle the profane Englishman who would stroll out on the Sabbath with a cigar in his mouth, though he did not miss attending the English service held in the parish church mainly for his benefit. One of these missionaries received the crown of martyrdom at his hands, or rather at his feet, for the poor fellow had no sooner begun his remonstrance, "Sir, do you know this is the Lord's Day?" than he found himself vigorously kicked along the road. This was an arbitrary as well as an open-handed gentleman, who, as a sound Tory and master of a thousand workers, was disposed to look down on the Whig duke, so much looked up to by the natives. He little knew how his only daughter would marry a son of that duke, whose heir made a more brilliant match with a princess, as to which *Punch* hardly exaggerated the simple judgment of Argyll: "Wasna' the Queen a proud woman!"

The duke has been a Campbell for time out of mind; but the silent ruins round Oban are older than the intrusion of this name. Dunollie Castle, close to the town, was lair of the Macdougalls, ancient lords of Lorne, who still hold here a remnant of their shrunken domain, and in their modest home behind the ruin have treasured that brooch their forebear won from Robert Bruce. The larger Dunstaffnage, another Macdougall stronghold, is believed to have been at one time seat of

The Land of Lorne

the ancient Scottish kings, shrine of that mysterious "Stone of Destiny," fabled as Jacob's Pillow, and St. Columba's, which, after many adventures by land and sea, was removed to Scone, and thence to Westminster Abbey. Gylen Castle, on the island of Kerrera, was a Macdougall eyry; Aros and Ardtornish guarded the Sound of Mull for the Lords of the Isles. Across the Firth of Lorne the island shores are haunted by Maclean legends. To the south, the castles and chapels of Cantyre are Macdonald and Macmillan monuments; and Isla, now the most prosaically prosperous of the Hebrides, shows traces of days when it was chief seat of Somerled's house. But most of those ruins, before they fell into picturesque decay, had passed to Campbells, often by deeds of fire and blood, often again by the marriages that have done so much for this family, of whom it might be said, as of another clan, that they put wedding rings on the fingers of the daughters, and dirks in the hearts of the sons. In our day, indeed, the most thriving house in Argyll seems to be that of Malcolm, whose head, it is said, can walk forty miles on his own land. The name would show his ancestor as "servant of Columba," while the misnamed "Macallum" was at one time "Gillespic," the gillie of some bishop who would be pioneer of civilisation before barons or dukes got grants from court.

Cantyre, with the adjacent Isla, appears to-day the most tamed part of the West Highlands. This peninsula was almost depopulated by the great plague of Charles II.'s reign; and to some extent became

The Highlands and Islands

restocked by Covenanting clients of Argyll from the Lowlands. There was a time when it might be called the heart of Scotland, for here seems to have been the first foothold of the Dalriad Scots, who, passing over from Ireland, its cliffs only some dozen miles off the Mull of Cantyre, spread their power far among the wild Picts, and their name before long over the whole kingdom. Campbeltown boasts of having been their first capital, now the largest burgh of Argyll, noted for its distilleries and its fishing fleet, as for the adjacent coal-mine, which is the only one in the Highlands, and for the grand golf-links on Machrihanish Bay, another feature more frequent on the eastern side of Scotland.

But if Scotland take shame to have been colonised from Ireland, its patriotic and poetic antiquaries point back to dimmer days, when an Ossianic Conar sailed from Lorne to found a kingdom in the Emerald Isle, long before its most thriving part was authentically overrun by Scottish names. National pride has indeed little but mist from which to weave theories of romantic early history, either for Albin or Erin. The one thing certain is, that the people or peoples of these projecting shores were in close connection of peace and war with each other. If Columba carried the cross from Ireland into Scotland, Patrick had been a Scotsman who devoted himself to the conversion of Ireland. And the Isle of Man, which is said to have made part of his mission-field, long stood in near relation with the Hebrides. The whole string of western islands was formerly divided



THE ISLANDS OF ORONSAY AND COLONSAY.

The Land of Lorne

into Nordereys and Sudereys, the latter being at one time under that bishop whose mysterious title Sodor and Man is thus explained.

All these once belonged to the crown of "Norro-way over the foam," even Cantyre, which, by the forced title of dragging a boat across its narrow neck, shifty King Magnus brought into his island domain. As we go farther north and out into the open sea, in place-names and other marks we shall see clearer signs of that Norse conquest, which cannot but have modified the stock of natives or previous invaders. For one point, the philo-Celt can protest that if Highlanders be no strict teetotalers, such a failing came not from the pious and sober Gael, but through ungodly Goths, notoriously addicted to wassail as to bloodshed. Then in Ireland, too, these thirsty Vikings have left some trace of their customs.

Tamed and trimmed as much of Lorne has been, no Highland region shows more variously those aspects of earth and sky, sublime, stern, sad, and anon tender, that seem reflected in the character of the people. Sir Archibald Geikie, who pushes scientific candour to the point of hinting that Bannockburn would have gone otherwise had the ground been drained, finds the Highlander's nature moulded by his rugged hills and streaming glens. The contrast between the Scottish and the Irish Gael, which some would explain by the former's stronger strain of Norse blood, this author accounts for rather by the fact of the latter enjoying a milder climate, a better soil, and more level fields, that give fairer play

The Highlands and Islands

to the natural buoyancy, good-humour, and quick wit of the Celt.

In the Highlander, on the other hand, these characteristics have been replaced by a reserved, self-restrained, even somewhat sullen and morose disposition. He is neither merry nor witty, like his cousin across the Irish Channel. Yet he is courteous, dutiful, persevering; a courageous foe, an unwavering ally, whether serving in the ranks or leading his comrades where dangers are thickest. I am disposed to regard this difference in temperament as traceable in great measure to the peculiar condition of the Highlander's environment. Placed in a glen, often narrow and rocky, and separated from his neighbours in the next glens by high ranges of rugged hills, he has had to contend with a scant and stony soil, and a wet, cold, and uncertain climate. He has to wage with the elements a never-ending battle, wherein he is often the loser. The dark mountains, that frown above him, gather around their summits the cloudy screen which keeps the sun from ripening his miserable patch of corn, or rots it with perpetual rain as it lies week after week on the sodden field. He stands among the mountains face to face with nature in her wilder moods. Storm and tempest, mist-wreath and whirlwind, the roar of waterfalls, the rush of swollen streams, the crash of loosened landslips, which he may seem hardly to notice, do not pass without bringing, unconsciously perhaps, to his imagination their ministry of terror. Hence the playful mirthfulness and light-hearted ease of the Celtic temperament have, in his case, been curdled into a stubbornness which may be stolid obstinacy or undaunted perseverance, according to the circumstances which develop it. Like his own granitic hills, he has grown hard and enduring, not without a tinge of melancholy, suggestive of the sadness that lingers among his wind-swept glens, and that hangs about the birken slopes around his lonely lakes.

The Land of Lorne

There is little need to point the stronger contrast between this dweller beside hungry mountains or cruel seas, and the otherwise mingled race that has grown stout, ruddy, and jovial on Lowland or Midland plains, among green pastures and still waters, where the cattle, hardly raising a head to look beyond their own hedge-rows, may well be content with their lot, and the very dogs, familiar and placable, will not always trouble to wag a tail at the wayfarer. Generations of ancient peace have here tamed men's spirits, quieted their fears, and worn down their reverence to a sober respect for honesty, good-fellowship, good-nature, prudence, prosperity, all the qualities which make neighbours pleasant company and keep them from coming on the parish. They think for the most part little enough of the awful horizons of life, as they saunter through it from the christening cake to the coffin, with an eye more often on the fruitful ground than on the sky, unless for signs of the weather. A charm of homeliness rests upon churches, halls, farms, and hamlets, scattered roomily in secure confidence, where man may well nestle in the kindly lap of earth and rejoice in nature's gifts to a generation for which rough edges of peril have been blunted by use and wont. Yet when she fondles not, but scrimps their daily bread with frowns, her hardy sons love their motherland the more dearly for her rare smiles, even though the poverty of their home makes it easier for them to believe that elsewhere must be their abiding city.

Lorne would be no Highland country if it had not as

The Highlands and Islands

many relics of devotion as of romance, some of them from days of chiefs and priests who prayed and fought long before its Christian saints and its half-Christian princes. Not any part of Scotland is more thickly set with ruined chapels, broken graveyards, caves of Columba, and *Kils* common as the *Llans* of Wales, which mark the stations of Culdee preachers. But also it abounds in cairns, barrows, and other nameless memorials; and there is reason to suppose that many of its Christian tombs have been adapted from pagan monuments far older than the cross that consecrated them. Near Oban there is a remarkable serpent-shaped mound, headed by a circle of stones, which appears to have been a high place of superstition, kindred to that which raised similar mounds in the Mississippi basin. This is but one of many Highland examples how our shifting divisions of creed, name, and nation are now divergent, now confluent, phases of the same human nature, that out of stocks and stones, funeral piles and grave heaps, has developed its countless temples, the barn-like Presbyterian kirks of Cantyre, as well as such elaborately sculptured walls as long stood silent on Iona. But how slow is the clan of Macadam to learn from their purest faith that Christian and pagan, Scots and Irish, Celt and Saxon, Campbells and Macdonalds, have nobler duties than cutting each other's throats in the way of war or trade!



IONA CATHEDRAL.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOLY ISLES

OUR critical age, while it develops a new reverence for the past, has worked havoc among time-honoured etymologies of place-names. A letter stolen into *Hebudes*, the old form of Hebrides, makes unstable base for derivation from a heathen goddess represented in Christian mythology by St. Bridget or St. Bride, whose name turns up so often in the Highlands. But from time immemorial these warring seas clashed around island sanctuaries. Christianity here took over many shrines of an older worship, and long sacred fires to burn on new altars, with ministrants and vestal virgins bound by holier vows. Books like Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough* teach us what outworn superstitions still lurk in disguise about the walls of manse and schoolhouse ; how children having the Shorter Catechism by heart may play all unsuspecting with relics of heathendom ; how their fathers, while banning the sign of the cross, preserve in ugly obelisks the idols of pagan high places ; and how the festivals of forgotten Baals may still command maimed rites among

The Highlands and Islands

those who frown at Christmas or Good Friday as recalling Romish superstition. Mourners who abhor a form of prayer at the grave will take a funeral out of its way that it may follow the course of the sun after ancient custom. There are sacred wells in the Highlands, long ago baptized by some Christian saint, that have not wholly exhaled their ancient virtue in this or that disorder, and, at least within a few years back, had yet their votive offerings of pins or bits of rag. It is a question whether the renowned Loch Maree gets its name from the Virgin Mary, or from a certain saint, Mourie, *alias* Malruba, whose memory became so confounded with that of a heathen bugbear that as late as Covenanting days the Presbytery was scandalised to find bulls still sacrificed to this dubious evangelist.

Old books speak of the western islands as sacred, some of the smallest among them appearing specially hallowed ground. How did successive adorations come to be concentrated on the low, bare islet of Iona, lying a mile off the farther point of that long promontory called the Ross of Mull? From the dawn of legend it seems to wear a misty halo. Its oldest name means *the* island; in Gaelic it is the Isle of the Druids; then its *alias* Icolmkill embalms the memory of St. Columba, who from this beacon-fire lit the Gospel all over the Highlands. What task that was may be guessed by the picnic pilgrims whose passage from Oban often turns out so rough that not all of them are at ease to indulge Dr. Johnson's elevated mood among such sacred ruins.

The Holy Isles

Palladius is said to have been the earliest missionary to Scotland. He was closely followed by St. Ninian, whose light seems to have smouldered on the savage shores of Galloway, till from his dying hand St. Patrick in the fifth century carried it over to Ireland to blaze up before half of Europe. From this school of piety and learning in the next century came St. Columba, as penance for sin devoting himself to the conversion of the wild Picts. The legend goes that he first disembarked on Oronsay, but quitted it because thence he could still catch sight of his beloved Ireland. Landing on Iona, he buried his boat lest he should be tempted to return. But he had no sooner settled his little band in rough wattled buildings than they were building other coracle craft of wicker-work covered by skins, in which to launch forth on the perilous Hebridean seas and up the long inlet of lake and glen that opens the heart of the Highlands. In the second half of his busy life he pushed repeated journeys to the far north, to the Orcades, even, it is said, as far as Iceland, preaching through interpreters, founding mission stations, and planting civilisation as well as faith among barbarous people. With the double text *laborare* and *orare*, he taught his followers to make the best of that poor soil of Iona, from which such pregnant seeds went forth on every wind. He is said to have copied the Gospels three hundred times with his own hand.

This saint had his weaknesses, those of his creed and time. He would allow no woman on Iona, nor

The Highlands and Islands

even a cow, for “where there is a cow, there is a woman ; and where is a woman—” we know what monks thought of Eve’s daughters. An adjacent islet was given up to a nest of nuns who had fluttered towards this cold halo. So great waxed the fame of Columba’s sanctity that pilgrims sought his retreat from all parts of Western Christendom ; and a sore pilgrimage that must have been that ended at the point of Mull, where a miraculously strengthened hail would bring over a boat from the island. Still the saint’s memory looms through a cloud of miracle and fable, behind which we catch the human proportions and qualities of a strong good man, who had such power of winning hearts.

It is possible that his part in the conversion of Scotland has been exaggerated. In his lifetime St. Kentigern was at work among the Cumbrian Britons, and the two evangelists are said to have met at Glasgow. About the time of his death landed in Kent those Roman missionaries who were long on such dissenting terms with the native church that the Anglian saint Guthlac, after spending a night of terror, beleaguered as he believed by Welsh Christians, gave thanks in the morning to find how the assailants of his hermitage had been no worse than devils. The Culdees, whom Presbyterians have claimed as spiritual forefathers free from Popish error, are taken for disciples of St. Columba, though some Roman writers go about to invest them with Augustinian orthodoxy. Into heathen Northumbria also went his missionaries, to encounter



INTERIOR, IONA CATHEDRAL.

The Holy Isles

those of Rome over a great part of England ; and on the east coast the Holy Isle of Lindisfarne grew to be another Iona.

While Scotland went on being dotted with the Culdee chapels and monasteries, Iona became a Christian Mecca, as well as a centre of education and missions. The bodies of princes and chiefs were brought here to be buried in sacred ground, as Persians to-day undertake long perilous pilgrimages to lay the bones of their dead beside those of Hussein or of Imam Reeza, whose tombs, as Iona was, are still sanctuaries of refuge from human justice or revenge. Sixty kings of Scotland, Ireland, and Norway have been counted as buried in this little isle, some of them perhaps since before Columba's time. Duncan and Macbeth are fabled to lie here side by side ; yet when we come to more authentic kings, this royal sepulchre seems no longer in reverence, for even Alexander II., who died conveniently on the island of Kerrera, was carried for burial all the way to Melrose.

There can be no more impressive sight than the burial-ground with its sculptured stones and worn crosses that mark now the undistinguished dust of men who at least "did not expect to be so soon forgotten." By the twelfth century Cluniac monks had taken the place of the original garrison, more than once broken up by raids of Norse pirates. The oldest building is St. Oran's Chapel, believed to have been erected by the pious Margaret, Malcolm Canmore's English queen, who built also the chapel in Edinburgh Castle.

The Highlands and Islands

The Nunnery appears to be later work, and the Cathedral to date from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century. These memorials, hastily visited by drenched and sea-sick tourists, make but fragments of the ecclesiastical state that once flourished on Iona. Its monuments came to be rudely treated at the Reformation, when all but two of 360 crosses are understood to have been thrown into the sea by an iconoclastic Presbytery, unless some of them had been transported to the mainland, as perhaps was that fine one preserved at Campbeltown. The memorial chapels seen by Dean Munro at the end of that century have since disappeared. The high altar of white marble still stood at the time of Pennant's visit. About 1830 vanished obscurely the last of the black stones on which Highlanders of old swore their most binding oaths, perhaps the oldest of all Iona's relics, once as sacred as the corner-stone of the Kaâba. So late as the English reign of James I., at the prompting of that pacific king, two clans met here to make a solemn covenant of peace after centuries of bloodshed. Now the Cathedral, given up by the late Duke of Argyll to the Church of Scotland, is being restored; and the choir has been already turned into a place of Presbyterian worship for its small congregation. The marble quarries of the island, one hears, are again to be exploited for the adornment of other churches.

Nine miles to the north of Iona lies Staffa, whose columned caves can hardly have escaped serving as pagan fanes—



The Holy Isles

Where, as to shame the temples decked
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seemed, would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise !

Like the kindred scene of the Giant's Causeway, this island is dedicated to the dim memory of Fingal, and has a reversible legend of the tricks played by a comic Scottish on an Irish giant, whose parts are exchanged in Paddy's version of the story. Fingal's Cave is entered by tourists when the weather allows ; but sometimes they cannot even land, and in any case will be so pressed for time on their day-trip from Oban that one may quote to them Miss Gordon Cumming's more leisurely taken view of a famous spectacle, which moved Scott's friend Erskine to tears :

A wondrous fane indeed, with the perfect symmetry of its countless gigantic columns, and marvellous roof, formed (like the strange pavement outside, and like the gallery on which we stand) of the broken bases of hexagonal pillars, which fit together in faultless honeycomb. The colouring, too, is a marvel of beauty, for this basalt combines every tint of rarest marble that ever human skill brought together to decorate the costliest temple. Warm red and brown and richest maroon tones prevail, but the whole gleams with green and gold lichen and sea-weed, while here and there a mosaic of pure white lime has filtered through, encrusting the pillars, which seem transformed to snowy alabaster. Ever and anon, the innermost depths of the great chancel gleam with a sudden flash, as the clear green wave comes swelling in, overflowing the causeway of broken pillars that forms so marvellous a pavement, and breaking in pure white foam, which shows more dazzling against the gloom of that sombre background, and casting

The Highlands and Islands

trembling reflecting lights, which trickle and waver over every hidden crevice of roof, or clustered columns. Quick as thunder-roar follows the lightning-flash is that white gleam succeeded by a booming sound, louder than the thunder itself, yet mellow as the sweetest note of some huge organ, and wakening echoes deeper and more sonorous than ever throbbed through dim cathedral aisles ;—echoes which linger and repeat themselves on every side, and are but hushed for one moment of awful silence while the exquisite green water recedes, only to rush back again with renewed force, re-awakening that thrillingly-solemn chorus, which, in ages long gone, earned for this cave its old Gaelic name of *Uaimh Bhinn*, “the melodious cavern.” Altogether it is a scene of which no words can convey the smallest idea, and as we pass suddenly from the glaring sunlight into that cool deep shade, and look down into the wondrous depths of that world of clear crystalline green, we cannot choose but believe that we have invaded the chosen home of some pure spirit of the sea—some dainty Undine, whose low musical notes we can almost think we discern, mingling with the voice of the waves.

Johnson did not take the trouble to turn aside to Staffa, which had been brought to notice about that time by Sir Joseph Banks ; and there is reason for belief that the title “Fingal’s Cave” was imposed by this savant. But indeed the Doctor had passed unwittingly near other marvels of columnar basaltic formation, such as are found in many parts of the Hebrides, sometimes on a more enormous scale, if not so regularly finished as at Staffa. MacCulloch, who says much the same of Ulva, declares that had Staffa remained unknown, the caverned promontory of Duin, near Duntulm at the north-east corner of Skye, would

The Holy Isles

have won like celebrity. Then all round the eastern side of this headland the same formation is continued, where Loch Staffin's name proclaims its relationship with that "Isle of Columns," and the "Kilt Rock" takes its title from a chequered display of many-coloured strata crossed by lines of grass, bearing up monstrous plaits and stripes of stone, red, brown, and yellow. The Shiant Isles between Skye and Lewis show another grand columnar façade rising out of the sea. The island of Eigg abounds in small ranges of basalt more or less exposed, all overshadowed by the mile-long organ-face of its Scur, that at one point towers to a height of about 1300 feet, a more gigantic Giant's Causeway piled up in tiers to the clouds, till often its head seems to hang in air, like an enchanted castle beleaguered at its base by glooms and mists, whirling forth from the fearsome peaks of Rum.

Skye has as many memories of Columba as if here had been the home of a saint whose name has been associated with more West Highland chapels and caves than there are modern churches in that wide diocese of his. Near Iona, Colonsay is named after him, as Oronsay from his companion Oran, the ruins of a monastery still visible on the latter, and the abbey on the former not yet forgotten. But one cannot enumerate all the remains of ancient piety scattered over the Hebrides, in most cases ill accessible to hasty curiosity. The chances of reaching and in rough weather of landing on those islands give consideration how cut off from the world they were before the days of Watt

The Highlands and Islands

and Macadam, and under what difficulties the sturdy apostles carried on their work. Some out-of-the-way islands may still have to go without ordinances of the Church for months or years together. Some islets are garrisoned by a single family, or by the crew of a light-house, who in one case were swept away together by the cruel Atlantic waves, an accident proclaimed by the dying out of their lantern. There are parishes like that of the "Small Isles," where the minister has to be sailor as well as divine; yet often his boat must turn back in sight of an expectant congregation. On the mainland, too, inlets and swollen rivers may make getting to church no matter of course. Norman Macleod tells of Morven, where his grandfather's stipend began at £40 a year, that it contained 2000 souls scattered over 130 square miles with a seaboard of 100 miles, and not a road in the parish. I have known cases where people walked a dozen miles or so to church; I have had farther to go myself, but that was to a "chapel," attendance at which, one fears, made excuse for a Sabbath drive. It is no wonder if Highlanders are found a little behindhand in theological fashions, while zealous for the faith as they understand it to have been once delivered to Presbyterian saints.

Even in sight of Oban hotels one may still find them so near and yet so far. I once spent some time on the green island of Lismore, "the great garden," that lies as one of the breakwaters of that smart tourist-haven. Not so much of a garden now, this island was

THE ISLAND OF EIGG.



The Holy Isles

an old seat of the Argyll Bishops. The *Book of the Dean of Lismore* is a famous sixteenth-century collection of Gaelic poems. Later on, the Presbyterian minister of the island had a grandson who became Lord Macaulay. Forty years ago its only mansion preserved what had been for a time the Catholic College now flourishing on the Dee, its Refectory, fitly enough, being used as a dining-room, while the chapel was desecrated by division into a smoking-room and a carpenter's shop. The then owner was a lady who without scandal may be called peculiar. Though herself from the Lowlands, if I am not mistaken, her whim was to play the Highland chieftainess of the good old time. The tenants were encouraged to bring cases before her for decision, Donald's hen scratching in Duncan's garden, or such like ; and as the judgment, along with a mild admonition to the offender, usually included a bottle of whisky presented to each party, there was no lack of recourse to her amateur jurisdiction. As became her state, she kept a barge in which to go shopping at Oban, but the crew were always hard to get together, still more so from the whisky shops of the town. One day, on the way back, a midshipman of our party took upon himself to steer and give orders in such a quarter-deck tone that the offended Highlanders mutinied by lighting their pipes, folding their arms, and sullenly letting us drift about a long afternoon at the will of the currents, till either Celtic pride relented or some touch of Caledonian prudence counselled keeping us all out of mischief, when the presuming youth had humbled

The Highlands and Islands

himself so far as to own that it takes local experience to navigate those waters. The distance across in a straight line may be some half-dozen miles, and the alternative way to Oban was by walking or driving a score of miles and passing three arms of the sea.

The only other house of anything like gentility on the island was the minister's, who took in dipsomaniacs to board, shut off from temptation by rushing tides. My fellow-guests were, all but one, lads of my own age, who in this social solitude had a grand time of it, fishing, swimming, and crawling over rocks to stalk shy seals that basked on the outer side of the island, cheerfully drenched and tanned by turns, like ourselves. Our hostess we hardly saw, as one of her peculiarities was being invisible all day, and haunting the house by night. It may seem ungracious to tell such tales of a too hospitable lady, dead many a day, but the fact is that I do not remember even her name, which I never heard till she haled me, almost by force, to her fortress, whence it was quite an adventure to get away. I had to bribe an English servant, another remarkable "character," who played the part of masterful factotum in this domain. With his connivance I was to slip out at 2 A.M., to be driven to the farther end of the island, and there by boat to waylay a steamer on its zigzag course from the Outer Isles. At the moment of escape, to my confusion, the *châtelaine* turned up, who did not try to detain me, but insisted on being my companion, and caused such delay by her vagaries that I nearly missed the steamer, then much offended the Highland



THE ISLAND OF CANNA.

The Holy Isles

boatmen by too peremptorily bidding them haste, as if I were a chief of Ulva's Isle with Lord Ullin's daughter on board instead of an eccentric widow lady. That strange imprisonment on Lismore would have been a more irksome experience later in life ; yet I have often thought what a chance of making "copy" was there lost to a writer of books.

What travel among those broken shores was before steamboats—the boarding of which from pierless islands may still be adventurous—we may guess from David Balfour's troubled wanderings, from the delays of Dr. Johnson's difficult tour, and from the fact that when old Dr. Macleod went to college at Glasgow the journey from Morven by land and water took ten days. Inns also are still few and simple in such poorly peopled wilds, where to guard the distressful Celt against a besetting sin his lords have sometimes enacted a private prohibition of liquor law. Nor has this stretch of the southern Hebrides much to tempt the general tourist from his lines of more luxurious travel. Some points well deserve an hotel and guide-book notice, such as the grand quartzite masses of the Paps of Jura, commanding a view from Skye to the Isle of Man ; and the map of islets and inlets spread out, weather permitting, below the triple-crested Ben More of Mull, whose little white capital Tobermory has been compared to a damp Naples in respect of looking its best from the sea. Professor Blackie, with his sanguine optimism, proclaimed Mull "the most beautiful of the western isles" ; but that is not a generally received tenet. Its

The Highlands and Islands

coast makes a fretwork of rocky patterns that become monotonous, repeated in miniature upon some of the adjacent islets and peninsulas. But striking scenes may be too widely scattered among what at first sight seem featureless stretches of sea, moor, and rock, that will not take every stranger's fancy in their common setting of mist and rain, out of which hasty comers and goers at Oban often carry away the impression of nothing more cheerful than its red-funnelled arks of escape from a hopeless deluge.

To have the coy charms of these landscapes picked out for us, we must go to a fervent West Highland amateur like William Black, who himself, in glorifying the prospects of Mull, is fain to hint how they may strike another's eye less winningly :

Where he, eager to please her and show her the beauties of the Highlands, saw lovely white sands, and smiling plains of verdure, and far views of the sunny sea, she only saw loneliness, and desolation, and a constant threatening of death from the fierce Atlantic. Could anything have been more beautiful? he said to himself—than this magnificent scene that lay all around her, when they reached a far point on the western shore, in face of them the wildly-rushing seas, coming thundering on to the rocks, and springing so high into the air that the snow-white foam showed black against the glare of the sky; the nearer islands gleaming with a touch of brown on their sunward side, the Dutchman's Cap, with its long brim and conical centre, and Lunga, also like a cap, but with a shorter brim and a high peak in front becoming a trifle blue; then Coll and Tiree lying like a pale stripe on the horizon; while far away the mountains of Rum and Skye were faint and spectral in the

The Holy Isles

haze of the sunlight. Then the wild coast around them, with its splendid masses of granite, and its spare grass a brown-green in the warm sun, and its bays of silver sand, and its sea-birds whiter than the white clouds that came sailing over the blue. . . . And could anything have been more magical than the beauty of that evening, after the storm had altogether died away? The red sunset sank behind the dark olive-green of the hills; a pale, clear twilight took its place, and shone over those mystic ruins that were the object of many a thought and many a pilgrimage in the far past and forgotten years; and then the stars began to glimmer as the distant shores and the sea grew dark; and then, still later on, a wonderful radiance rose behind the low hills of Mull, and across the waters of the Sound came a belt of quivering light as the white moon sailed slowly up into the sky.

Montalembert, in his *Monks of the West*, is very positive as to the austerity of scenes that, beheld by a wave-tossed scholar, might well seem the antipodes of *La Belle France* :

Nothing less attractive, on first approach, than this harsh and stern scenery. Its picturesque is without charm, and its grandeur without grace. One sadly traverses an archipelago of desert naked islets, like so many extinct volcanoes, scattered upon a dull leaden sea, sometimes broken by rapid currents and whirling gulfs. Except on rare days when the sun, that pale sun of the north, comes out to enliven these coasts, one's eye wanders over a vast surface of brackish water, here and there streaked by whitening wave crests, or by a foamy line of surf breaking now upon a long reef, then against huge cliffs from which one hears afar the lugubrious roar. Through the fogs and incessant rains of this rude climate, it is hard to catch the summits of the mountain chains, whose steep, bare slopes fall down into these cold waters, always kept astir by the shock of

The Highlands and Islands

contrary currents and of the squalls that burst from the lakes and narrow defiles inland.

Yet these Highland coasts, dull or forbidding as they may look from the sea, warm into charmingness under loyal eyes like Norman Macleod's, that can never forget the wild play-place of a happy boyhood :

A castled promontory, a range of dark precipices supporting the upland pastures, and streaked with white waterfalls, which are lost in the copse at their base, form a picture not very imposing compared with "what one sees everywhere." A long ridge of hill rising some two thousand feet above the sea, its brown sides, up to a certain height, chequered with green stripes and patches of cultivation ; brown heather-thatched cottages, with white walls ; here and there a mansion, whose chimneys are seen above the trees which shelter it—these are the chief features along its seaboard of many miles. But how different is the whole scene when one lands ! New beauties reveal themselves, and every object seems to change its size, appearance, and relative position. A rocky wall of wondrous beauty, the rampart of the old upraised beach which girdles Scotland, runs along the shore ; the natural wild wood of ash, oak, and birch, with the hazel copse, clothes the lower hills and shelters the herds of wandering cattle ; lonely sequestered bays are everywhere scooped out into beautiful harbours ; points and promontories seem to grow out of the land, and huge dykes of whinstone fashion to themselves the most picturesque outlines ; clear streams everywhere hasten on to the sea ; small glens, perfect gems of beauty, open up entrances into deep dark pools, hemmed in by steep banks hanging with ivy, honeysuckle, rowan-trees, and ferns ; while on the hillsides scattered cottages, small farms, and shepherds' huts, the signs of culture and industry, give life to the whole scene.

The Holy Isles

Perhaps few of us can rightly learn to love West Highland scenery who have not in youth grown familiar with every blush of heather, every skin of copse or bracken, every brown rib bared amid the turf, and all the moods of those stern features under changing lights and shadows. One surpassing glory of this region is the evening skies that may reward patient sufferers under rain, for which see William Black's cruises, *passim*. I have travelled in four continents without elsewhere catching a more brilliant glow of summer sunset than on the hills of Ardnamurchan or Appin, where short winter days will sometimes die out in a rosy glory diffused all round the horizon. Waller Paton's Highland skylscapes were accused of being too Turneresque in their gorgeous hues ; but they make indeed no exaggeration of what a Gaelic bard calls "the tartan of the sky." The more lovely for their uncertainty are the day-long or week-long spells of fine weather that may come in the heart of a stormy summer, sometimes lasting for a month or two while the plains of the south seem to draw away the freakish mountain clouds. Then in late autumn the west has often a truce of halcyon days brooding peacefully over horizons where Italian blue, touched with native softness, melts into a glassy sea among the openings of richly tinted hills. And at all times the clearing after rain may produce effects which a city poet aptly compares to the raising of the curtain on a pantomime transformation scene.

More often the face of this region shows overcast,

The Highlands and Islands

in too true keeping with its gloomy traditions. The Christianity spread among these islanders seems long to have been but skin deep, where every ruin is haunted by memories of cruelty and hatred from days when the cross itself was dearest as a fiery summons to bloodshed. Between Lismore and Mull rises the Lady's Rock, on which Maclean of Duart let his wife, Argyll's daughter, be exposed to the mercy of the tide, by one account for no worse crime than that of being a Campbell ; but a more elaborately romantic version brings in jealousy of a Spanish *señora* which urged this dame to procure the historical blowing up of an Armada ship, whose guns were recovered in the last century, and at our own day fresh attempts are on foot to dredge out her long-buried treasures, as to which has been suggested the knotty legal question whether they should not be the property of the king of Spain, then at peace with Scotland. The lady's peril had a dramatic ending which made this an oft-told tale : she was rescued by fishermen of her father's clan, and when the husband came to Inveraray clad in hypocritical woe, what seemed her ghost confronted him at the funeral feast that proved his own.

It was the Macleans of Mull who slaughtered their MacIan guests at the wedding feast of their chief's daughter. On the same shore, Bloody Bay is named from a fierce battle between father and son. On another side of the island is shown the cliff over which a vindictively smarting clansman leaped with the infant son of his chief, who had caused him to be scourged.



TOBERMORY.

The Holy Isles

On Eigg may be visited the cave where the whole population of Macdonalds were suffocated by the Macleods of Skye, in revenge for their having set some Lotharios of the latter clan adrift, bound and starving, in an open boat. Another atrocity of the Macleods turned out less successful, when they sought to burn a shipwrecked Macdonald crew in the barn that offered false hospitality ; but the intended victims got warning in time through one of those love intrigues that so often laughed at hereditary feuds. Of different castle dungeons the story is told how a prisoner here was fed on salt beef, then left to agonising thirst, as many another captive has starved to death, gnawing his own flesh in solitary despair. The annals of more than one clan give it as exterminated in a day of slaughter, but for posthumous sons borne by defenceless widows. Adamnan, the ninth abbot after Columba, is credited with a humane law against women being exposed to death in battle ; but long after his time innocent children were not spared by Highlander nor by Lowlander in the glut of vengeance. The severance of creed at the Reformation seems to have whetted those bloodthirsty lusts. The more famous massacre of Glencoe is outdone by one of Covenanting times, when hundreds of Macdonald prisoners, Cavalier partisans and “ Amalekites,” were in cold blood dashed from the rocks of Cantyre by Presbyterian soldiers of Argyll.

Tradition, be thou mute ! Oblivion, throw
Thy veil, in mercy, o'er the records hung

The Highlands and Islands

Round strath and mountain, stamped by the ancient tongue
On rock and ruin darkening as we go—
Spots where a word, ghost-like, survives to show
What crimes from hate or desperate love have sprung ;
From honour misconceived, or fancied wrong,
What feuds, not quenched, but fed by mutual woe.

So Wordsworth was moved to exclaim in the Sound of Mull ; and we may take his example to pass quickly over a catalogue of sickening deeds that go to show how, with all their unenlightened devotion, the far Highlands were half heathen up till the time of the Jacobite risings. Then a vigorous enforcement of law was accompanied by a movement of civilising evangelisation, that put the people on a higher level both in Protestant and in Catholic districts. In some parts the Catholic faith has never been ousted. In some its adherents have vanished only by migration, as on the island of Canna, with its conspicuous tower of a modern fane, erected as memorial of a Catholic peer. In some cases the chief was able to lead over or to lead back his people in a body, an easy process of conversion that does not speak much for their principles. In the parish of the Small Isles, Pennant heard of congregations “indifferently” attending the services of priest or pastor, whichever happened to turn up. As a rule, the two communions live more kindly together in the Highlands than do the Orangemen and Papists of Ireland. In certain nooks the Episcopalianism of Stuart days still obstinately survives, where in many cases the first Presbyterian preachers had a rough



THE HILLS OF IURA.

The Holy Isles

induction, as that one who, on his presenting himself a second time at Kinlochewe, was stripped naked, tied to a tree, and left to be tortured by midges ; or that Perthshire presentee that could find no shelter but in the house of the charitable divine whom he came to displace, who held his own for years after the intruder had been marched, under escort of bagpipes and drawn swords, to the bounds of the parish, and there dismissed unhurt only after taking an oath never to return.

In most parts of the Highlands, however, the Kirk took its place with more or less acceptance, the thinly-placed ministers helped by an inferior order of "catechists" and by the schools promoted through a Christian Knowledge Society. This church had the name of being on closer terms with lairds, tacksmen, and factors than with the mass of its flock. About a century ago began to pass over the Highlands waves of evangelical revival, by which dissenting and other missionaries stirred the souls of an excitable people. In the north especially great influence was exerted by self-appointed censors of morals and doctrine called the "Men," of whom the ministers themselves often stood in awe, and who, by their insistence on the sternest aspects of a stern theology, preluded to that revolt against "moderate" religion that came to a head in early Victorian days.

Since then the most active and most attractive body of faith in the Highlands has been the Free Church of Scotland, whose ministers succeeded to much of the loyalty lost by chiefs turned into unpopular land-

The Highlands and Islands

lords. As the Free Church was the austerer wing of the Old Kirk, so itself is lately split into two branches, of which the more rigid has taken deeper root among the mountains and islands where the old Calvinistic and Covenanting views, banished from city pulpits, now find asylum. And when not even the more liberal section of their own church seems pure in the sight of Gaelic zealots, it might be expected that they would look on the Erastian Establishment as Moabite and Philistine, albeit its nominal doctrines and ritual are the same as their own. The struggle between these two has been marked by an acrimony transferred from the former clan feuds, and in most cases the Old Kirk went down like the Macdonalds before the Campbells. Where means of grace are so hard to come by, the Free Church might be thought to do well in garrisoning some neglected end of huge, wave-sundered parishes ; but often it has chosen rather to gather its congregations beside the emptied parish church. In Iona, for instance, with its two or three hundred inhabitants, there rose both an Established and a Free Church in the face of the Cathedral, whose long-deserted stones silently preached such a moving sermon for hearts open to "the still, sad music of humanity."

The communion, now so powerful in the Highlands, is accused by its enemies of provoking more to "sound" faith than to good works, but it appears to have raised the moral character of the clergy, perhaps at the expense of their culture, while it too indiscriminately sets its face against the joys of life fostered by divines like Norman

The Holy Isles

Macleod's forebears. The Free Church has done its best to frown down not only bogeys and fairies, but the bagpipes, fiddling, dancing, and other alleviations of a hard lot, on which is imposed the burden of the Mosaic or Babylonian Sabbath, so patiently taken up by Scotsmen in exchange for the penances of the monkish dispensation. The Catholic priests are more tolerant : in at least one island the bagpipe summons the people to mass ; but the orthodox Calvinist frowns at music unless the pseudo-Biblical strains of the Jew's harp, which, under the name of the trump, has long been popular in the Highlands. Here lingers the prejudice against instrumental music in church, not so long ago strong over all Scotland, as was the childish objection to hymns, even scriptural paraphrases, or any sacred songs but those believed to be written by David. Thus the prevalent theology has become accomplice with hard times and sad surroundings in deepening the cloud that lies over Highlands and Islands.

But neither theology, nor poverty, nor a humid climate has damped the martial spirit of the Highlanders, and no section of our population gave larger or quicker response to the call of the War. The day after it was declared not a fishing boat put out from certain islands, unless it were to carry off their sons for service in the navy or army. What service they did is well known to our enemies ; but alas ! too many of these gallant lads never again saw their native isles.

CHAPTER V

PIBROCHS AND CORONACHS

LONG before reaching Ben Nevis the delicate-eared Southron may shudder at a far-heard strain, which some strangers, indeed, find “not so bad as it sounds,” as the Frenchman said of Wagner’s music, while others will indulgently admit—

It was wild, it was fitful, it died on the breeze,
It wandered about into various keys ;
It was jerky, spasmodic, and harsh, I declare,
But still—it distinctly suggested an air.

The bagpipes need no apology in ears to the manner born. They are well beloved in the Lowlands as in the Highlands ; and even about a London terminus one is hardly more safe from them than in the wilds of Lorne or Lochaber. When the savant St. Fond came to Edinburgh, grave Adam Smith, learning that he held music part of the wealth of nations, took him to a bagpipe competition, which he describes as exciting such enthusiasm among sober citizens as might be expected on what is not the native heath of this instrument. It was once, indeed, no more specially Scottish than it

Pibrochs and Coronachs

was English, Irish, Italian, or, for the matter of that, European. What seems to have been added to it in the Highlands is the great drone, helping the pipes to express a fierce or melancholy music, whose strains, in turn exulting and wailing, recommended themselves strongly to the keenly-set feelings of the Gael. The chief's piper was an hereditary official in several clans, often one of no little dignity, having his acolytes and his pipe-bearer, and not condescending to play for common revels. There was a college of M'Crimmon pipers at Dunvegan in Skye, where the Macdonalds maintained a rival school of MacCarters; and the names of other champion performers are not forgotten. The piper held his head so high in the Celtic world that still Highland pride seems typified in the swelling port and strut of his degenerate descendants. His finer notes are in danger of being lost, now that they will not be so much called on for occasions of state or mourning; but as often as we relapse into the savagery of war, there is found no screech like the bagpipe's to heat men's hearts to slaughter point, as some of our modern Highland stocks may have known to their cost when first they encountered the true children of mountain mists. In older days, "the harp that once through Tara's halls" is claimed as the stately music of the Highlands also, and if we went far enough back, we might find cows' horns the only music known to rude warriors, till some effeminate stranger introduced among them an art nursed on sunny Mediterranean lochs and sounds. But the reader need not fear to be

The Highlands and Islands

let in for an antiquarian lecture. The bagpipes will serve me like the blessed word Mesopotamia as text for a rambling discourse on past and present in the country looked down on by Ben Nevis.

It seems typical of the new order that Ben Nevis, one of those mountains said to be held on a snowball tenure, belongs in part to a Southron whose very name denotes "England's cruel red," and in part to a family which has blended the once hostile blood of Campbell and of Cameron with that of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, the "Justice Shallow" whose deer Shakespeare poached, according to Elizabethan scandal. No contrast could be greater than between this property and the Lucys' lordly park in the flat Midlands. Rising to the heaven that names it, from a base thirty miles in circumference, the highest crest of Britain is not so much a towering peak as "a colossal bundle of the hugest of Scotland's mountains rolled into one mighty mass" of cloudy ridges and stupendous precipices, whose magnitude grows on the beholder from various aspects, most impressive perhaps that of the dark gulf filled with rolling mists that opens on the north-east side. These stern steeps that once echoed to pibrochs and coronachs, and gave their fallen stones for the cairns of many a forgotten feud, were in our generation crowned by a monument of the spirit of a new age. Monument indeed, for as I write comes news that the Ben Nevis Observatory has been deserted through an unromantic lack of funds, which in any other civilised country would have been supplied from the public purse.

Pibrochs and Coronachs

For years this cloudy post was garrisoned by a band of intrepid weather watchers, bearing the brunt of the great Atlantic storms, in whose teeth they snatched hints to build up scientific meteorology. Not that their knowledge has as yet risen much beyond its foundations, when Mr. Robert Omond, the first captain of that crow's nest, truly then to be called highest British authority on the subject, rebukes more confident seers by the dictum that our weather's "coming events cast their shadows before" no farther than a day or two, and then not for certain. More striking results were deserved by the devotion of these hermits of science. With hares, foxes, and weasels for nearest neighbours, their chief complaint seems to have been of only too many visitors, in summer at least, when scores daily would toil up the path made for constructing and provisioning their eyry, whereon the weak-kneed Lowlander may stumble and murmur; yet had he seen this road "before it was made," he would rather bless the Scottish Meteorological Society that has done so much for it under such arduous circumstances. But again they would be weeks without seeing a human face, even on a postage stamp, unless some adventurer made an Alpine ascent through the snow to bring news from the outer world to their hermitage, built strong and solid like a lighthouse. At the height of summer banks of dirty snow may be found on the top, where John Leyden and his friends had an August snowball fight. In winter the crew of observers were often buried in snow-banks, through which they must dig

The Highlands and Islands

themselves out ; or it would be all they could do, roped together, to struggle against the wind to their instruments a few yards off. Sometimes it was impossible to crawl to windward against such a gale as once for fifteen hours kept them imprisoned in their cramped quarters, the only exposed window broken by a bombardment of hard snow lumps torn up and hurled by the wind. Rainbows proved rare so far up in the clouds, and so did heavy thunderstorms, though the air has at times been found alive with frizzlings and cracklings of invisible electricity that made men's hair stand on end ; and once their telegraph apparatus was fused by lightning. As often as not their mountain solitude was wrapped in dark, dank, chilly fog, through which they durst not lightly trust themselves by the edges of the perilous abysses around. In one day they measured more than seven inches of rain. But again that ark of theirs would stand up in glorious sunshine above the lower tops lying islanded in a sea of mist, which had rolled back from the top to leave its high tide-mark sparkling with feathery crystals. I once spent ten Christmas days at Bournemouth without a glimpse of the sun, when a letter came from the top of Ben Nevis reporting a fortnight of dry, clear weather, lit through the short day by a wonderful play of colours in the sky. And at all seasons, from their hundred-mile prospect point above the clouds, the observers might catch wonderful optical phenomena, coronæ of most vivid colouring painted on a film of scud-cloud, fog-bows, both solar and lunar, and the



PORT ASKAIG, ISLAY.

Pibrochs and Coronachs

weird adumbration called “glories,” described by Mr. Omond :

In winter when the sun is low, even at noon, the shadow of a person standing near the cliff that runs all along the northern side of Ben Nevis is cast clear of the hill into the valley below. In bright winter weather this deep gloomy gorge is often full of loose shifting fog, and when the shadow falls upon it, the observer sees his head surrounded by a series of coloured rings, from two to five in number, varying in size from a mere blotch of light up to a well-defined arch 6 or 8 degrees in radius. This phenomenon does not present quite the same appearance as the better-known Brocken Spectre, for here the shadow of the observer, in consequence of the distance of the mist from him, does not appear unnaturally large ; in fact the image of one's head appears as a mere dark speck in the centre of the coloured rings. These glories are less common in summer—though they have been seen near sunrise and sunset.

At the foot of Ben Nevis lies Fort-William, a town once dubbed Gordonsburgh, and before that Maryburgh, in honour of Dutch William's consort ; but its old name was Inverlochy, famed by Montrose's dashing victory over Argyll, as by a former battle between the forces of James I. and his troublesome vassal, the Lord of the Isles. Cloudier history would have it an ancient royal seat of Scotland, where King Achaius is fondly believed to have made a treaty with Charlemagne, first seal of that league between two kingdoms often united in enmity to England. These are ticklish subjects : MacCulloch the geologist was hereabouts turned away from even Highland hospitality

The Highlands and Islands

because he could not believe that Fingal made the parallel roads of Glenroy, in which Nature seems so artfully to have copied the works of man.

Legendary chroniclers have placed at Inverlochy the site of a great commercial city in the Highland golden age ; but the only trace of such antiquity is, not far off, one of those “vitrified forts,” puzzling savants as to whether their ramparts were turned to slag by accident or design. There is a painful suspicion that the old castle, at one time held by the Comyns, may have been the work of an English king, three centuries before James VI. tried to found a town about it as civilising agent for the Highlands. It was certainly General Monk who began the modern fort that in William’s time became strengthened to hold out against ill-equipped besiegers. This work, impregnable in 1745, has now yielded to the railway company, whose station takes its place. Before the railway came here, Marshal Wade’s roads and Telford’s Canal had bridled the wild Highlandman as effectually as that chain of military posts hence reaching up to the Moray Firth by Kil-Comyn, the modern Fort-Augustus, and by Castle Urquhart on the banks of Loch Ness. This was another fortress of the Black Comyns, then of the Grants, taken by Edward I.’s soldiers, and assailed by many a fierce foe, till it gracefully surrendered to the shafts of time.

Earth buildeth on the Earth
Palaces and towers ;
Earth sayeth to the Earth,
All shall be ours.



Pibrochs and Coronachs

From Ben Nevis we look over that great cleft in which Loch Linnhe, running up from the Firth of Lorne, is continued by the lakes of Glenmore, a natural boundary-line for the Inner Highlands. The so-called Highland line formed by the face of the Grampians running obliquely from the Clyde across the Forth and Tay, then beside Strathmore to Aberdeenshire, walls in the Outer Highlands, in the main long mastered by stranger lords, who, indeed, soon fell under the Celtic charm and brought themselves to be as Gaelic as the born Gaels, not the less demonstratively as Saxon speech and Lowland customs crept in by the mountain passes. It is across that central cleft we must look for the *Bretagne bretonnante* of Scotland, among secluded lochs and glens where the people were longer sheltered from outside influences. The noblest summits and the most famous scenes are to the east of the Great Glen; perhaps the grandest mountain mass is the block of the Cairngorms in the north-east, below which Balmoral basks in the sunshine of royal favour; but to the west rather lingers the soul of the Highlands. This is particularly true of the Inverness bens, glens, and lochs between Ben Nevis and Skye, a region that has for its proper name "The Rough Bounds" (*Garbh Criche*), while it made part of old Argyll, "coast of the Gael," a name once extending as far up as Loch Broom.

Glenmore is a highway of civilisation well trodden by tourist generations. Of late years the extension of the London N.E. line to the coast has opened up

The Highlands and Islands

further romantic wilds, thick set with ruined strongholds and shrines, with crosses and cairns, and with monuments of less-forgotten history. One column marks the spot where Charles Edward raised his standard in Glenfinnan; another commemorates the Lochiel Cameron who died at Quatre Bras, as loyal to King George as his fathers to Charles and James. In those cloudy recesses, beyond the forts of the Great Glen, gathered silently the storm of 1745 to whirl far over Britain. Here Macdonalds and Camerons only half-welcomed their rash prince, the old chiefs too prudent not to see the risks of his enterprise, yet too proud to hold back from it when hot young heads panted to meet the Lowlands in battle array. The first encounter was on the Spean, by whose valley a branch line now holds up the Great Glen to Fort-Augustus. The main line winds round the head of Loch Shiel, and on to the deep fiords near Arisaig, where the adventurer reached the mainland, and whence he made his perilous escape. From Arisaig, looking out on the picturesque islands Eigg, Rum, and Muck, the railway follows the coast to Mallaig, opposite the southern end of Skye, a region hitherto almost beyond the waterproofed tourist's ken, if not the sportsman's, now plying his expensive pastime among the lonely graves of clans who, for all their pride and valour, went down before the disciplined stranger because they could not keep their swords off one another.

It was not by chance of weather that Charles Edward landed in these parts, to start his Phaeton



Pibrochs and Coronachs

career from the Rough Bounds. Hence, if we take in Badenoch to the east and Lochaber to the south-east, came the strongest bodies of fighters in that lost cause, whose poet tells us how "the fiery cross was sped" with news that the "Prince had come again." As a matter of prosaic fact, the fiery cross seems to have gone out of fashion by 1745, when the only mention I can find of it is in Perthshire, there used, not very successfully, as summons to arms both for and against the Prince. On the Dee and the Tay he found followers, not so numerous as his well-wishers; but within a day's march from Glenfinnan was the first and the best recruiting-ground of "the clans of Culloden." This second-hand phrase I have "lifted" from Mr. Henry Jenner's series of articles in the *Royalist*, organ of the "White Rose League," in which the subject is naturally treated with special sympathy. There is no lack of sympathy for those slain and scattered clansmen, their memory held in honour by that House that seems in little danger of being bowed off its throne by the "White Rose" ladies and gentlemen, when the top of Ben Nevis flared with bonfires to hail Queen Victoria's Jubilee and King Edward's Coronation. We are perhaps too ready to forget the coarse features of a life dressed in blood-stained tartans, and what might have come of Prince Charlie's winning a kingdom whose liberties have thriven best under sovereigns making neither picturesque nor lovable figures in history. But if we wish to drop a tear for the last romance of Britain, it may well be done under

The Highlands and Islands

the rainy sky of the Rough Bounds, that sent out so many champions to dye the White Rose in bootless blood.

It is not to be understood that all those bellicose clansmen were born in the allegiance to which they might be soldered on by choice or circumstances. As among the Red Indian tribes, there seems to have been frequent adoption of "broken men," or fugitives from another name. We know how chieftains of the good old time were in the way of gathering about them adventurous banditti, whose bond of union was congenial bloodshed as well as kindred blood. The proudest Cameron of our day can be less sure of not having Campbell blood in his own veins than of its having stained his forefathers' hands. The portion of a Highland heiress would sometimes be part paid in "a set of stout men," who henceforth had to be loyal to the husband's tartan. Another hint of how clans, themselves no thoroughbred stock, might become mixed together is found in that ugly story of two hundred Farquharson bairns, made orphans by Gordon and Grant swords, scrambling in a half-naked herd to be fed like pigs from a trough at Huntly Castle, till the softer-hearted Grant chief adopted them into his own tartan. When the "Stewarts of Appin" went out in 1745, more than half the dead and wounded of their contingent appear bearing the names of miscellaneous Macs, who, had they not gathered to this standard, might have been swallowed up with others among the loyal Campbells.

Pibrochs and Coronachs

Lochaber was the country of the Camerons, whose leader, the "gentle Lochiel" of 1745, appears one of the noblest Highland nobles, as to whom, when he died a colonel in the French service, a poet on the other side of politics declared that he "is now a Whig in heaven." He exerted himself to put down *creagh* raids among his clansmen; but the old blood was stronger in another Cameron of the French army, who, after Culloden, under the name of "Sergeant Mòr" became renowned as a Rob Roy of Lochaber. Lochiel's brother, Dr. Cameron, betrayed and hanged in 1753, made the last martyr of Jacobitism. Sir Alan, son of one of the Camerons of Culloden, lived to raise three battalions for King George, whose fame and name have been inherited by the Cameron regiment, now perhaps enlisting no more Camerons than find their way into the Cameronian corps of such different origin. The most celebrated Cameron was the Lochiel of Cromwell's time, Sir Ewen the Black, who came to the chieftainship as a boy, and died under George I., a doughty champion of the Stuarts through his long life. Argyll, his guardian, had sent him to school to be brought up in sound Whig principles, but, like other boys one knows of, he "preferred the sport of the field to the labours of the school." Among the exploits attributed to him is the killing of the last wolf in Britain, an honour also claimed for a later Nimrod farther north. In his teens he was already at the head of the clan, a thorn in the side of Campbells, Covenanters, and English Roundheads; and after being the last royalist to submit to General

The Highlands and Islands

Monk, he lived to fight beside Dundee at Killiecrankie, then to send his clansmen out in 1715, when he himself, it is said, came to be rocked in a cradle of second childhood ; but another account describes him at ninety as able to read the smallest print and keeping all the teeth with which he had torn out the windpipe of one of Cromwell's officers, as they locked in a deadly struggle like FitzJames and Roderick Dhu.¹ In the interval he had waged many private wars, notably with his neighbours the Mackintoshes, which luckily ended in a treaty wiping out the feud of centuries. The last clan battle in the Highlands appears to be that between the Mackintoshes and the Macdonalds of Keppoch, fought in Glenroy, 1688.²

The Mackintoshes were a branch—with the fear of Cluny Macpherson before us, we must not say the senior branch—of that Clan Chattan that fought on the Inch of Perth, from which also appear to have

¹ Mr. Drummond-Norie, in his *Loyal Lochaber*, records the amusing legend "of an incident that occurred during Sir Ewen Cameron's visit to London many years later. He had occasion to go into a barber's shop to get his beard and hair dressed. The garrulous barber having fixed him in position, and probably guessing from his accent that he was not born south of the Tweed, remarked : ' You are from the north, sir, I believe ? '—' Yes,' answered Lochiel, ' I am ; do you know people from the north ? '—' No,' shouted the angry barber, ' nor do I wish to ; they are savages there. Would you believe it, one of them tore the throat out of my father with his teeth ; and I only wish I had the fellow's throat as near me as I have yours just now ! '"—The end of the tale is that Lochiel never again trusted himself in the hands of a barber.

² In *Bonnie Scotland* I rather loosely spoke of the Campbell invasion of Caithness as the last private war, meaning by this term to exclude a collision between adjacent clans.

Pibrochs and Coronachs

sprung the Camerons, the Shaws, the Macgillivrays, the Farquharsons, and several other names. Their opponents, the Clan Kay, seem more shadowy. Those Mackintoshes are said to have been once at home about Lochaber; but the later world they bustled in was farther north, where they had for neighbours the Red Comyns of Badenoch, as once the Black Comyns of the Great Glen. The Comyns were a clan of Norman origin, at one time masters in Lochaber, as again for a time were the Gordons, whose head, Lord Huntly, vied with Argyll in playing chief policeman for the Highlands. There is a grim story of the Mackintoshes and the Comyns: the one clan bidden by the other to a feast at which, these cat-and-dog *convives* sitting alternately, the appearance of a boar's head was to be signal for the hosts to stab each man his guest; but the guests had the very same idea, and carried it out with more prompt dexterity. Chroniclers strangely differ as to which clan here played the active and which the passive part; and the same story, with the same doubt, is told of my Forbes forebears and their Gordon neighbours. It must be feared that such treachery made part of Highland social amenities in the good old days. A record more honourable to the Clan Chattan is of a battle that left in the hands of the Murrays—mere Lowlanders disguised in tartan—some two hundred Mackintosh prisoners, from not one of whom could torture or shameful death wring the secret of their chief's hiding-place. Another Mackintosh chief was

The Highlands and Islands

not so lucky, who stooped to put himself in the hands of the Marchioness of Huntly, and as humiliating condition of forgiveness for injuries, even laid his head upon the kitchen block, when this dissembling dame had it struck off by the cook's hatchet—so much for trusting a Gordon! In the '45 the clan did not stand shoulder to shoulder, its chief, an officer in King George's militia, falling prisoner to his own wife, "Colonel Anne," who had taken the field on Prince Charlie's side. In later times, after the benignant fame of Sir James the Reformer, this name's most shining exploit has been the invention of an armour against rain, the enemy most to be feared among those mountains, where the Mackintosh of our degenerate days perhaps does not disdain to cover his gay tartan with a waterproof

Of his rival, Cluny Macpherson, it was told in my youth how he sternly rebuked an effeminate clansman who visited him under an umbrella. The Cluny of Culloden was the hardy chief who for years after lurked in a "cage" of sticks and turf, close to his own castle, where he occasionally ventured himself, and once had nearly been caught by the redcoats through the unheroic accident of his getting so drunk that his servants had to carry him out in a plaid and hide their unconscious bundle in the woods till the search was over. The most widely famed Macpherson in modern days was that author or editor of "Ossian." If any of this clan desire more unquestioned renown, let him invent some defence of proof against the midges that

Pibrochs and Coronachs

are the most bloodthirsty swarms of the Highlands, now that the pibroch and the coronach die away in dance music.

For his services at Bannockburn the Lord of the Isles was rewarded by Bruce by a grant of Lochaber. So this region in part, with the Rough Bounds, came to be the country of the Macdonalds, in their various septs, distinguished by the name of their seat, or sometimes by a minor patronymic, as the MacIans of Ardnamurchan and of Glencoe, while some came to write themselves Macdonell, but all boasting to be of the great Somerled's line, in which, indeed, the sons of Dougal seem entitled to the first birthright. The clan Donnachie, though disguised as Robertsons, claim also to be of the same stock. Other septs, now bearing separate names, were as proud to count themselves of Donald's prolific race. The Macintyres, for instance, "sons of the carpenter," tell about their ancestor, an illegitimate shoot of the Lord of the Isles, that when in a boat with his father, the peg coming out, the whole crew would have been drowned if this ready youngster had not chopped off his thumb with an axe to stop the hole, and the admiring chief exclaimed, "The thumb-carpenter!"—a nickname that stuck. A Lowland hero under the same circumstances would probably have been canny enough to use his thumb as a plug without cutting it off.

Wherever they came from, the Macintyres drifted inland into Lorne, and at Glenorchy gave birth to Duncan Ban, one of the most famous of unlettered

The Highlands and Islands

Gaelic bards, who died in 1812 as a veteran of the Edinburgh City Guard, his muse more scrimply fostered than that of Burns, though now his memory is honoured by a stately monument at Dalmally. He fought in the '45, perhaps not very heartily, as a private soldier of King George, while his contemporary rival, Alexander Macdonald, was out with Prince Charlie, in whose praise he made the very popular song of *Morag*. There would be few of his name on the other side; and Mr. Jenner, for his part, stoutly denies the story that Culloden was lost through the Macdonalds holding back in offended pride.

At Ardtornish, on the Morven coast, the Lords of the Isles held parliaments of their own, and once presumed to make a treaty with an English king, foe of their lightly regarded suzerain. Even when that quasi-regal state had crumbled, we find Macdonald chiefs proposing negotiations with Queen Elizabeth, sending out troops to fight in Ireland, and hiring mercenaries to serve in their own private wars. Their name, made famous abroad by the Duke of Tarentum who served Napoleon so well, became at home split into sub-clans not always on the most clannish terms. Heaven forbid that any peaceful scribbler should touch that bristling question, which of the sons of Donald represents the senior branch from John of the Isles? Between Clanranald and Glengarry has been in hot dispute a distinction which to the mere Sassenach might suggest that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. I am instructed by an earnest genealogist that Clanranald, now a

Pibrochs and Coronachs

peaceful householder of London, is the true prince. The Glengarry family, on the other hand, has made more noise in the world. The heir of Glengarry, like his neighbour Lochiel, viceroy of an exiled chieftain, held his head gallantly in and after the '45 ; but alas ! his memory has lived to be branded as "Pickle the Spy" in two books by which Mr. Andrew Lang turns an accusing light on the "shabby romance" of later Jacobitism.

This blot of then invisible ink on his scutcheon would be unknown to the Glengarry of Scott's day—"XVII. Mac-Mic-Alaister," as he styles himself on a local monument—who posed so proudly, the last of the chiefs. His friend, Sir Walter, speaks of him as a Highland Quixote, and is understood to have taken him as model for Fergus M'Ivor. But the chief of *Waverley* showed more sense and more craft than Glengarry, who in town and country strutted about with his "tail," including a bard, whose strains have been drowned by those of our Lowland last minstrel. Not to speak of his controversy with Clanranald, more than once this warm-hearted but hot-headed hero had to answer to the law for violent proceedings in the good old style. He killed a young grandson of Flora Macdonald in a duel, for which he was tried and acquitted, the code of honour being still received as testimony in courts. At the coronation of George IV. he appeared in full Highland costume, including showy pistols which set a lady screaming at him for a would-be regicide ; and the indignant chief had to submit to

The Highlands and Islands

disarmament, in vain protesting that his weapons made as much part of the character as his tartans. When the fat king came to Edinburgh in kilts, and poor Scott sat down on the glass out of which sacred majesty had drunk, Glengarry insisted on his swash-bucklers being adopted in the royal bodyguard. He appeared to most advantage as a Nimrod, lying out on the hills for a week together in his kilt and plaid. His excellent breed of deerhounds was celebrated, one of them as Scott's Maida, named after a battle in which the chief's brother fought for King George. Such a picturesque survival of the past died, 1828, in a prosaically modern accident, leaping from a steamboat that had struck the rocky shore, where Loch Linnhe narrows to the bent Loch Eil. A thousand guests came to his funeral feast and coronach.

It was quite in keeping with this chief's personage to leave his estate so much encumbered that the heir had to seek new fortunes in Australia. Now, there is hardly a Macdonald in this country, once safe for no other name, while there are thousands thriving in one corner of Nova Scotia and in the Glengarry county of Ontario, where a jury has been known to be half Donald Macdonalds. Much of Glengarry's property passed to Edward Ellice, a well-known Liberal statesman of the Bright and Cobden period, intimate with men of light and leading whom the old Glengarrys would have looked on as anathema. On Loch Quoich, the "cup" so well filled by rain, stands a luxurious shooting lodge, provided with electric light, motor-cars,

Pibrochs and Coronachs

and comforts undreamed of in the Saltmarket, its visitors' book enshrining a generation of distinguished autographs. Glenquoich has been let on a long lease to a famous Sassenach brewer, who here entertained King Edward VII. in princely style among the wilds through which that poor Chevalier slunk ragged and hungry, scared from the camp fires of his pursuers, and glad to take refuge in a cave of robbers, scorning to betray him for more gold than was ever handled by Pickle the Spy. A royal visit called forth an article in the *Scotsman*, whence one may borrow a purple patch :

If there is in Scotland a grander view than can be seen from the shore of Lochquoich on an autumn evening, the writer does not know of it. The fairy land of the Celt was one of "seven bens and seven glens and seven mountain moors," but the moors and the glens and the bens around Glenquoich fall to be numbered by the hundreds, and not by sevens. Sheer from the water edge rise the mountains, green at their base, flecked with heather along their sides, ridge upon ridge, peak upon peak, overwhelming the mind with a feeling of that Omnipotence which weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance, before whom men are altogether vanity. West from the lodge the loch bends slightly towards the south, and, narrowing as it recedes, it stretches out towards the setting sun, pushing a tapering finger among the roots of the giant hills ; and the farther west it goes, the higher rise the enveloping mountains. And the wonderful autumn sunsets of the west flush them all—Sguir a' Mhoraire, Sguir a' Shlaidhemh, Sguir Gairoch, Meall a' Choire Bhuidh—till their splintered peaks and pinnacled heads glow and glitter in amethyst and gold, while their sides gleam with a hundred polished silver shields, and the stray clouds, sailing inward from the western sea, glide high

The Highlands and Islands

over their crests, swimming in glory. And the light, still radiant above, fails in the corries below, covering the slopes with a deep, deep blue, such a blue as one sees only in the west when a mountain comes athwart the setting sun. When the evening is still (and often the wind that rustles during the day sinks at eve into a calm), the face of the loch is as a sheet of glass, and deep in its translucent depths. The mountain crests and the transfigured clouds melt one into another, trembling with the ecstasy of their mingling, till the whole face of the loch is a veil through which there glows a kaleidoscope of radiant colours, darting hither and thither as if greeting and embracing one another.

The Rough Bounds include a dozen freshwater lochs that hitherto have had too little note in guide-books, the most renowned of them Loch Arkaig, where the Macdonalds and other clans tried to rally after Culloden, and where Prince Charlie's treasure was hidden to be a Nibelungen hoard of contention among their leaders. One of his hiding-places here, near Lochiel's seat, Achnacarry, was a cave in the "Dark Mile," a scene not less deserving of fame than the Trossachs. Then the shores of this region present "one continued succession of picturesque and grand objects, in every variety that can be produced by bays, promontories, rocks, straits, and islands," their aspects again varied by "silent calm succeeding to all the fury of a raging ocean, by the dark tempest and gale, the bright blue of the cloudless sky, and the evening and morning splendours of a lingering sun." From Ardnamurchan, the westernmost swell of the mainland, the coast is almost equally divided between bare peninsular ridges

Pibrochs and Coronachs

and deeply pierced fiords, often wooded to the water's edge, or bordered by meadows that glow greener below the savage rocks of their background, where sometimes Nature would seem to have heaped up materials for some abandoned design. The intricate inlets of Loch Moidart are succeeded by those about Arisaig, then comes the freshwater trough of Loch Morar, tumbling down to the sea under a bridge at its mouth. A narrow ridge keeps this from mingling with the tide of Nevis, "Loch of Heaven," itself separated by the Knoidart Hills from Loch Hourn, "Loch of Hell," indeed a place of gloom, its approach pronounced by Lord Avebury "the most desolate and savage scene" in Scotland ; and it gave a congenial home to Barrisdale, that ruthless tyrant of Jacobite days, whose chivalrous varnish Mr. Andrew Lang has roughly scratched to show the Tartar beneath. Thus we come to Glenelg with its Pictish doons and its Hanoverian barracks of Bernera, for which, a quarter of a century after Culloden, a corporal and six men were garrison enough. Beyond this Skye almost touches the mainland.

The Rough Bounds are now broken in on by the line to Mallaig ; but should the *laudator temporis acti* be scared away from that thread of iron rail, he can turn his back on such intrusion, holding down Loch Shiel or Loch Sunart to the mountainous promontory of Ardnamurchan ; or southwards on the peninsula of Morven ; or into the Moidart country northwards, fastnesses of the old customs, the old tongue, and the old faith. But ah !—

The Highlands and Islands

Deserted is the Highland glen,
And mossy cairns are o'er the men
That fought and died for Charlie !

The scattering and displacing of the clans had begun before Culloden, when the heads of the Camerons and the Macdonells were in exile with their legitimate sovereign. On the edge of the Rough Bounds the Government had settled strangers, some of whom proved but perverse agents of their civilising mission. Soon after 1715, as we learn from a story in Burt, Glengarry had already been invaded by a troop of woodcutters under leadership of an English Quaker. An industrial undertaking of a kind rare in the Highlands was the lead-mining at the head of Loch Sunart, where Strontian, famed also for a rare variety of spar, has given its name to the metal whose carbonate was first found here. Iron-smelting was another promoted industry. What with miners, woodcutters, English flunkies, Lowland shepherds, transported gillies, rich proprietors, and sporting tenants, the population is much transmogrified since the days when each glen made a more or less happy family, as often as not on unhappy terms with its neighbours. Of all the strangers brought here upon Marshal Wade's roads, the most effectual missionaries of the new order have been the Presbyterian clergy, ordained to scant sympathy with the line that tried in vain to dragoon them into Prelatism. Norman Macleod tells the story that when a Morven laird came to church with a pistol, threatening to shoot the minister if he prayed for the king, that undaunted divine laid two

Pibrochs and Coronachs

cocked pistols on the pulpit cushion, and kept both eyes wide open while performing this ticklish part of his function.

But where the Church by law established has the stipends, there are still nooks where Rome has the hearts of the people, elsewhere over the Highlands much given to the Free Church, two generations old. The best preserves of Catholicism lie here and there on this west coast, taking in some of the opposite islands, and straggling across the centre of the Highlands into Braemar. Of these oases of faith, as seen from one point of view, from another it is said that, as in Switzerland and in Baden, they can be distinguished at a glance from the Protestant districts by their aspect of greater poverty, with concomitant shortcomings. At least they have a chance to be richer in the spirit of a people once more disposed to the principles of the *Royalist* than to those of the *Edinburgh Review*. The Free Church clergy have been specially inquisitorial against old customs, fostered rather by the priests, who, so long as mass be not neglected, smile indulgently at the diversions and the memories of their flock, nor frown too sternly even at superstitious traditions. There was a time, of course, when this Church appeared as champion of the new against the old. It may be that in future generations we shall find enthusiasts as earnestly contending for "Sabbath blacks" as once for tartans, cherishing magic-lantern lectures when such have replaced Highland reels, and sighing over the beloved national strains

The Highlands and Islands

of the hurdy-gurdy silenced by the gramophone, the diabolophone, or whatever sweetness musical invention have in store for us—so easily do new customs grow to old ones, and so soon are conservative souls set firm on their high horse of sentiment!

Yet as the bagpipes have had a long lease in the Highlands, they may be good for many lives still, in spite of clerical and artistic condemnation. Nature here sets keynotes for the fierce exultation of the pibroch and the wail of the coronach, with which are in tune the songs and stories of this people. I am not going to wake the ghost of Fingal, nor to rouse echoes of controversy over Ossian, a poet said to have been blind like Homer and Milton, if he were not of the same shadowy stuff as Thomas the Rhymer: he has been guessed as identical with the Welsh Taliesin. Fin MacCoul's kingdom of Morven is unknown to history; but at least, for the Gael both of Albin and of Erin, such a hero lived in popular imagination as truly as Arthur and Achilles. It seems pretty well settled that the poems first published under Ossian's name owed much to Macpherson, who thus showed truly unpoetic modesty in standing back from renown that rang through Europe, though in England, nowadays, Leslie Stephen is not the only critic to yawn over what once enchanted Goethe and Napoleon; and Macaulay speaks with his cock-surest scorn "of a story without evidence and of a book without merit." It is also agreed that Macpherson worked upon some documents, human or written. When Dr. Johnson came



THE RIVER SPEY NEAR FOCHABERS.

Pibrochs and Coronachs

hunting purblindly for evidence against a real Ossian, there were bards alive in the Highlands who could neither read nor write, yet whose poems passed as household words from one unlettered fireside to another.

In the next century scores of collections of Gaelic poetry came to be made ; and still monotonous strains are murmured in the native tongue of the mountains. There are also stirring marches and choruses, like *Gabhaidh sinn an rathad mòr*, a tune known to Cockneys as their degraded “Kafoozlem,” that from the mouths of Appin Stewarts pealed defiance to the Macintyres, who had their own clan anthem in the grand song of *Cruachan Beann*. But sadness is the main note of these intricate and assonant metres, long drawn out round themes of love, war, and misfortune, like the “old unhappy things” of Ossian. In later times hymns as long as sermons have coloured the Celt’s less active life. Angry satire is another mood of his muse, and riddles seem to have had zest for his boyish mind ; but he shows little taste for hearty humour. In Scotland we have a vulgar saw that it takes a surgical operation to force a joke into an Englishman’s head ; and that reproach might as truly be applied to a pure Highlandman, of whom it is well said that his very language, in its weakness of a present tense, seems always looking forward to a melancholy future or back to a melancholy past.

Nor have schoolbooks and newspapers yet banished the homely tales and traditions that linger about the smouldering light of peat fires. We have seen how

The Highlands and Islands

these legends often recall those of other lands, all shaped as they may have been in some far-off nursery of the race. But here they take on sombre colours and congenial shadows, flickering and glooming in the alternation of long pale twilights and short dark days. One interest they lack, that hinted at in the phrase "smoking-room stories," a spice better relished in Saxon palaces than in Gaelic shieling or bothy. The character of these tales is well expressed by Alexander Smith, who, if he did not know Gaelic, had a poet's ear for the universal language of human nature, and moreover seems to have drawn at that fountain of Highland folk-lore, J. F. Campbell's *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* :

As the northern nations have a common flora, so they have a common legendary literature. Supernaturalism belongs to their tales as the aurora borealis belongs to their skies. Those stories I have heard in Skye, and many others, springing from the same roots, I have had related to me in the Lowlands and in Ireland. They are full of witches and wizards; of great wild giants crying out, "Hiv! Haw Hoagraich! It is a drink of thy blood that quenches my thirst this night"; of wonderful castles with turrets and banqueting halls; of magic spells and the souls of men and women dolefully imprisoned in shapes of beast and bird. As tales few of them can be considered perfect; the supernatural element is strong in many, but frequently it breaks down under some prosaic or ludicrous circumstance: the spell exhales somehow, and you care not to read further. Now and then a spiritual and ghastly imagination passes into a revolting familiarity and destroys itself. In these stories all times and conditions of life are curiously

Pibrochs and Coronachs

mixed, and this mixture shows the passage of the story from tongue to tongue through generations. If you discover on the bleak Skye shore a log of wood with Indian carvings peeping through a crust of native barnacles, it needs no prophet to see that it has crossed the Atlantic. . . . Many of these stories, even when they are imperfect in themselves, or resemble those told elsewhere, are curiously coloured by Celtic scenery and pervaded by Celtic imagination. In listening to them, one is specially impressed by a bare, desolate, woodless country ; and this impression is not produced by any formal statement of fact, it arises partly from the paucity of actors in the stories, and partly from the desert spaces over which the actors travel, and partly from the number of carrion crows, and ravens, and malign hill-foxes which they encounter in their journeyings. The "hoody," as the crow is called, hops and flits and croaks through all the stories. His black wing is seen everywhere. And it is the frequent appearance of these beasts and birds, never familiar, never domesticated, always outside the dwelling, and of evil omen when they fly or steal across the path, which gives to the stories much of their weird and direful character. The Celt has not yet subdued nature. He trembles before the unknown powers. He cannot be sportive for the fear that is in his heart. In his legends there is no merry Puck, no Ariel, no Robin Goodfellow, no half-benevolent, half-malignant Brownie even. These creatures live in imaginations more emancipated from fear. The mists blind the Celt on his perilous mountain-side, the sea is smitten white on his rocks, the wind bends and dwarfs his pine wood, and as Nature is cruel to him, and as his light and heat are gathered from the moor, and his most plenteous food from the whirlpool and the foam, we need not be surprised that few are the gracious shapes that haunt his fancy.

Campbell of Isla was just in time to save from

The Highlands and Islands

oblivion the Gaelic shape of far-travelled tales which even a generation ago the Gael felt half ashamed to repeat before unsympathetic strangers, and which now linger only in secluded glens and islands, told in the native tongue round peat fires by old folks too dim-eyed for newspapers. Superstition dies harder than romance; but of his superstitions he still less cares to speak, nor always to confess them to himself. They too are catholic and human, shaped by the environment of his life from the same materials as in fatter lands have dwindled to a horse-shoe nailed on a stable door. The student of mankind needs little research to fashion such shadowy images as come so ready to the mind's eye, "where every object of nature, even the un-reasoning dreams of sleep, are mirrors which flash back death"; and from the Highlander's misty shrouds of moor and sea, from the wraiths of his swollen waters, from ominous lights burning on cruel waves, from ghostly stirrings and tappings about his lone home, he may well have turned to the faith preached by St. Columba, yet is slow of assured belief that—

God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world !

CASTLE UROUHAET LOCH NESS



CHAPTER VI

TOURISTS

THE moralist who loved a good hater has surely no right to complain of not attracting affection; but I fear to shock many excellent persons in professing that Dr. Johnson seems to me an overrated personality. It is a commonplace that he shows much greater in Boswell than in his own books; and to that infatuated worshipper we owe a rarely intimate knowledge of one who appeals to John Bull as full of darling national faults. No wonder that English writers should take a warm interest in such a "character," and that Cockneys should crown him as their king; but when one finds Scotsmen of insight, like Macaulay and Carlyle, joining the chorus of veneration, one hesitates to put forward one's own doubts to the contrary.

Still, at the risk of seeming to kick a dead lion, let me say what an *advocatus diaboli* might bring against the canonisation of Fleet Street's saint. For generations it has been dinned into our ears that this man was wise sturdy, manly, pious, and so forth, above his fellows while it is admitted that he was narrow-minded, ill-bred,

The Highlands and Islands

full of petty prejudices and credulities, much of a bully, as well as on occasion a bit of a snob, as when he humbly deferred to the opinion of a Hanoverian king, whose pension he had accepted after all he said on that subject. He dealt much in moral maxims. So did Mr. Pecksniff. He was generous and kindhearted to queer objects of charity: let that stand to his credit. What was his vaunted sense of religion but an erudite superstition, wide awake to the "folly and meanness of all bigotry but his own," and not saving him from craven dread of death? He had such a lazy conscience that only when stung by Churchill's satire did he bring out the volumes on the subscription for which he had been living for years. As to his love of truth, even Boswell confesses the "robust sophistry" with which he would argue for the sake of contradiction. As to his taste, let his criticisms on Shakespeare and Milton speak. And why should we all be in a tale of reverence for the wisdom whose deliverances have proved wrong on so many points, notably in his opinion of Scotsmen. But for one Scot who was no great honour to Scotland, this ponderous writer would surely have been long ago "banished to that remote uncivil Pontus of the British poets," instead of being still welcome "within the cheery circle of the evening lamp and fire."

Even if one be moved to belittle this literary leviathan, one cannot but respect the courage that took him as an inactive and infirm senior into those ill-known isles, where indeed he shows to more advantage than on some other scenes of his life, the Jacobite sentiments

Tourists

that were his leaven of romance seeming to soften down such insolent contempt of outlandish starvelings as counts with your stout John Bull for virtue. He visited the Hebrides at an interesting time, when their old life was undergoing a rapid transition under new conditions, the commercial order, as R. L. Stevenson says, "succeeding at a bound to an age of war abroad and patriarchal communism at home." Some account of his venturesome journey, then, may not be without interest for a generation that does not much read that classical *Journey to the Western Isles*, nor even Boswell's own account of his bear-show, which in truth is more readable, none the less so for embalming some of the oracle's raciest impromptus before they were cooked up into "Johnsonese."

At Inverness the tourists took to horseback, with two Highlanders running beside them to bring back the horses. They travelled down the east side of Loch Ness to Fort-Augustus, beyond which they found soldiers at work upon the new military road by which they struck across the Rough Bounds into Glenmoriston, and thence by Glenshiel to Glenelg. Neither Boswell nor Johnson has much to say of the picturesqueness that moves their successors; the devout biographer is more concerned to record their fear of dirt and vermin, and the great lexicographer emits such recondite observations as—"Mountainous countries are not passed but with difficulty, not merely from the labour of climbing, for to climb is not always necessary; but because that which is not mountain is commonly bog,

The Highlands and Islands

through which the way must be picked with caution." After the ascent of one trying steep the sage was so cross that his Highland attendant cried out to him, "See such pretty goats!" as to a naughty child. This familiarity amazed Boswell, who found it quite natural that his tired mentor should fly into a passion with him for riding on ahead. When they reached the inn at Glenelg there was some excuse for being sulky, since, a dirty fellow bouncing out of the bed where they were to sleep, they chose to lie rather on hay, and got nothing to eat or drink but a bottle of rum and some sugar, sent in by a gentleman as tribute to the philosopher, who now behaved more philosophically, while it was the turn of his famulus to be fretful. Had the tourist of to-day seen those inns before they were turned into hotels, he might well bless the road-makers of the Highlands. But in Glenmoriston our travellers had had the luck to find an inn of which one room possessed a chimney and another a small glass window. A generation later the Rev. James Hall has to tell of one of the havens on this route, that after a hungry journey he confined his refreshment to bottled porter, on observing the hands of both mistress and maid.

The more luminous and voluminous Pennant, who had preceded that pair of tourists in the Highlands by a couple of years, exclaims over the fact that for two hundred miles along the west coast, from Campbeltown to Thurso, there was nothing that could be called a town. In Skye there were only one or two inns, and not one shop, according to Johnson, who gives the population

Tourists

of the island at some 15,000. The strangers had to depend on private hospitality; and their first experience was not cheering, as Sir Alexander Macdonald, who had come to a small house on the shore to receive them, was liberal only in bagpipe music. There were not even sugar-tongs on the table, Johnson noted with disgust, where knives and forks had made their appearance not long before; while indeed this fastidious citizen himself was in the way of eating fish with his fingers, so that his *convives* might have felt some need for sugar-tongs. But "Sir Sawney's," as he nicknames the parsimonious chief, was the one house at which he complains of mean entertainment. Usually he was treated like a lion, all the society of the district being gathered to hear him roar; and for the nonce he proved so little pock-puddingish as to enunciate "that which is not best may be yet very far from bad, and he that shall complain of his fare in the Hebrides has improved his delicacy more than his manhood." Boswell was satisfied with the respectful recognition given to his great man; and it was only towards the end of their trip that one ignorant laird asked if he belonged to the Johnsons (*i.e.* the MacIans) of Glencoe or of Ardnachurchan. Both travellers were edified by the books possessed by their hosts, who on the whole proved more cultured than they had expected, though their expectations were not pitched quite so low as that of an English tourist party stated, a generation later, to have equipped themselves with beads, red cloth, and such gewgaws for traffic with the naked islanders.

The Highlands and Islands

Skye was then mainly divided among three clans, Macdonald, Macleod, and Mackinnon, whose hereditary feuds, at last kept down by the arm of the law, began to be confused by the intrusion of strangers. The clansmen, unplaided and disarmed, had turned their claymores into such crooked spades as served them to dig up their rough soil; and Boswell observed how their targets came in useful to cover buttermilk barrels. The chiefs no longer went in semi-barbarous state with a "tail" of swashbuckling henchmen, and had ceased to keep a petty court of bards and sennachies, though a piper or two would not be wanting. Deprived of their hereditary jurisdiction, as some of them were ready to forget where the nearest magistrate might not be easily appealed to, they still had such dignity and influence that it would be their own fault if they did not attract the affectionate loyalty of which our travellers record some notable signs. But this sentiment was being uprooted by a disposition to raise the rents of their poor land, now commonly paid in money instead of kind and service. A new spirit of calculation was abroad since the days when faithful tenants had taxed themselves to pay double dues, to the power in possession, and to the exiled lord. Johnson shrewdly observed how the pastoral state began "to be a little variegated with commerce," how this Arcadia had been "a muddy mixture of pride and ignorance," and how the chiefs were disposed to take out in profit what they lost in power, then "as they gradually degenerate from patriarchal rulers to rapacious landlords, they will divest

Tourists

themselves of the little that remains." Pennant, who takes more note of the misery and dejection of the people, puts their numbers lower than Johnson, and states that the rental of the island, £3500 in 1750, had in twenty years been doubled or trebled on some farms.

The gentry of the island, lairds, "tacksmen," *i.e.* the higher class of tenants, and ministers, lived with more or less show of comfort in decent houses of two storeys, where, indeed, the parlours had often to do double duty as bedrooms, and the floors were not always clean or dry. The gentlemen, Johnson asserts, were inclined to the Episcopal Church; but could not afford any services beyond those of the parish ministers, who might have to preach in a room, at intervals of two or three weeks, beside the ruined chapels "which now stand faithful witnesses of the triumph of the Reformation." Of these pastors were "found several with whom I could not converse, without wishing, as my respect increased, that they had not been Presbyterians." He rather exaggerates in giving them the credit of having exterminated the popular superstitions, that would still take a good deal of extermination. He tells the story of Maclean caning the people of Rum away from mass, a high-handed conversion that in the neighbouring Catholic islands earned for Protestantism the nickname "religion of the yellow stick." He shows how schools were at work for enlightenment, where a century would yet pass before the three R's came within reach of every bare-trotting Gael. In Skye he heard of two grammar schools, at which boys boarded for three or four pounds

The Highlands and Islands

a year, but only during the summer months, "for in winter provision cannot be made for any considerable number in one place."

Even in the better-class houses wheaten bread was exceptional, oaten and barley cakes being the staff of life, with meat, game, fish, cheese, and preparations of milk. The cottars' fare was chiefly some kind of brose. Their poor crops went largely in making whisky, like that "Talisker," now renowned, which is said to owe its excellence to the water coming over some dozens of falls; but an English distillery has made in vain the expensive experiment of importing this charmed water. Only in Iona did Johnson hear of beer being brewed. Though every man took his "morning" as a matter of course, he did not see "much intemperance," convivial gentlemen being perhaps a little shy before the philosopher, who tasted whisky only once out of curiosity ("Let me know what it is that makes a Scotchman happy!"); but he cared not to inquire as to the process of distilling, "nor do I wish to improve the art of making poison pleasant." He certainly saw one "drunken dog" in the person of Boswell, who on a certain occasion sat up over a punch-bowl till 5 A.M., to be satirically rebuked by his monitor: "It is a poor thing for a fellow to get drunk at night, and skulk to bed, and let his friends have no sport." Boswell took special care to have this teetotaler provided with water at dinner, who was also well supplied with his beloved tea, and with the honey and preserves he admired on a northern breakfast table, "polluted as it was with slices



GLEN SLIGACHAN, SKYE.

Tourists

of strong cheese." The main deficiency was in fruit and vegetables, chiefly represented by barley broth. Punch, made for dinner and supper, which etymologically should have five ingredients, here wanted one, for Sydney Smith was never so far from a lemon. "Under such skies can be expected no great exuberance of vegetation," indeed, and "few vows are made to Flora in the Hebrides." Some of the lairds were trying to cultivate orchards about their houses. Others were zealously introducing turnips and potatoes, that have made such a difference to the Highlands but for years were banned by the stubborn conservatism of their people, as in other parts of Europe. What late hay they gathered "by most English farmers would be thrown away."

Their stock consisted chiefly of the small cattle, in which a Highland maiden's dowry would formerly be paid, like the price of a Kaffir bride. They had also ponies, an inferior breed of sheep, many goats, with fowls and half-wild geese. The Highland prejudice against pigs was still so strong that Johnson saw only one in the Hebrides;¹ and a like *scunner*, older than their knowledge of the Bible, kept the people from eating hares, eels, and scaleless fish such as turbot. Hares and rabbits had no chance against the big foxes, on whose

¹ It is a question whether the Celtic aversion to pork had not its origin in some such reverence as the cow bears among the Hindoos. The Gaelic for pig, which to Saxon ears sounds so fitting, *Muck*, has honour in place-names, as that of the great Ben Muich Dhu himself, not to speak of the "Boar" of Badenoch, the "Sow" of Athole, and frequent names of lochs and islands. In older days the Highlanders appear to have abstained from eating all fish; so at least some antiquaries assert.

The Highlands and Islands

head was set a guinea blood-money. Rats and mice were strangers to Skye, but the Hanover rat now began to invade some of the islands. The place of these vermin was taken by weasels, which infested even the houses.

In this land of "little sun and no shade," so deeply fretted by inlets that no part of it lies more than a few miles from the sea, where "every step is on rock or mire," Johnson missed villages and enclosures. "The traveller," he laments to Mrs. Thrale, "wanders through a naked desert, gratified sometimes, but rarely, with the sight of cows, and now and then finds a heap of loose stones and turf in a cavity between rocks, where a being born with all those powers which education expands, and all those sensations which culture refines, is condemned to shelter itself from the wind and rain." These "its" were often half starved, so could not but excite a mixture of contempt and pity in the well-fed English visitor. Pennant, with his practical eye, speaks of the people as torpid from idleness, only bestirring themselves at the pinch of famine ; but he does not want sympathy for them in the almost chronic famines due to improvidence under a miserable climate, where hundreds "annually drag through the season a wretched life ; and numbers unknown, in all parts of the western isles, fall beneath the pressure, some of hunger and some of the putrid fever, the epidemic of the coasts, originating from unwholesome food."

Leaving the comparatively green promontory of Sleat, Johnson's party rode over moors and bogs to Corrie-chatachin, near Broadford, where bad weather kept

Tourists

them a couple of days till Macleod of Raasay sent his "carriage" for them, and as conductor a gentleman of the clan who had done the same service to Prince Charlie in his wanderings. The carriage turned out to be an open boat, in which four half-naked men, chorusing Gaelic songs, rowed them through the Sound of Scalpa, and across a rough open sea to the island of Raasay, Dr. Johnson sitting high on the stern "like a magnificent Triton." In the new mansion-house, to which the Laird had removed from his tumbledown castle, they found a whole troop of Macleods, who every night danced and sang in honour of their guests ; but where they all slept was not so evident, some forty persons in eleven rooms. Among the rest was the Macleod of Dunvegan, a young man fresh from Oxford, who invited the strangers to his castle, for which they set out, not without scruple, on a fine Sunday. Landed at the harbour of Portree, then not even a village, where an emigrant ship was lying as hint of new times for the Highlands, they went round by Kingsburgh, that Johnson might have the satisfaction of making Flora Macdonald's acquaintance and of occupying the very bed in which the Wanderer had slept ; but the royal sheets had been devoted as shroud for the hostess. "These are not Whigs."

So little had they prospered on princely gratitude that Flora and her husband were on the point of emigrating to America, from which she eventually returned to be buried at Kilmuir in a grave left for our time to honour. From the heroine's own mouth, with

The Highlands and Islands

ekings-out of other information, Boswell compiled an account of Charles Edward's escape, which could now be safely published : even when she had been brought a prisoner to London, the authorities seemed not very eager to convict a fair traitor whose case excited much sympathy ; and perhaps the prince owed not more to her courage than to other half-loyal Macs who, in command of the local militia, winked hard at the tricks of their kinsfolk, and did not very keenly play the bloodhound upon the fugitive's doublings. Macdonalds, Macleods, and Mackinnons all were willing to help him away, though not many of them had turned out to take risks in his rash enterprise ; and the poorest cottar despised that price set on his head, while one of the men who would not earn £30,000 by betraying him came afterwards to be hanged for stealing a cow. The most zealous agents of the Government in this matter seem to have been Presbyterian ministers, Lord Macaulay's grandfather for one : this might be quoted as a case of ascending heredity.

Dunvegan, to Boswell's delight, was a real old castle, romantically placed on a rock, and his companion rejoiced to find that its *châtelaine*, having lived in London, "knew all the arts of southern elegance and all the modes of English economy." Pennant gives the prosaic detail that there was a post-office here, in something like a village, whence a packet sailed once a fortnight for the Long Island. "We came in at the wrong end of the island !" Johnson exclaimed, in no hurry to leave such good quarters. The old gentleman



Tourists

was suffering from a cold, having "very strangely slept without a nightcap," but one of the ladies of this hospitable family made him a large flannel one. As to that "strange" habit of sleeping bare-headed but for a handkerchief, Boswell very ingenuously owns that if his oracle had always worn a nightcap, and found the Highlanders not doing so, "he would have wondered at their barbarity." We may remember how in 1746 it was one of the royal fugitive's hardships to part with his wig. Now the well-nightcapped Doctor settled down in clover, dropping pearls of gruff wisdom eagerly picked up by Boswell, who for his part chuckled to be the keeper of such a treasure, comparing himself to "a dog who has got hold of a large piece of meat, and runs away with it to a corner, where he may devour it in peace." But if he had no longer to share Johnson's talk with the members of the Club, he had a rival satellite in the Rev. Donald Macqueen, minister of Snizort, who "adhered to" them on most of their journeys in Skye, and so well pleased the great man as only now and then to get a taste of his rough tongue, while his book duly compliments this gentleman on account "of our intelligence facilitated and our conversation enlarged."

At Dunvegan they stayed a week, hearing the traditions of the castle, and seeing its relics, for one that horn of Rorie More, to hold two or three bottles of wine, which every Laird of Macleod must drink at a draught in proof of his manhood ; in our degenerate age, it appears, this ceremony has to be performed by

The Highlands and Islands

help of a false bottom. No doubt they also saw, though neither of them mentions it, another more lordly drinking-cup bearing the date 993, which seems to have been a chalice; also the "fairy flag" of Dunvegan, a faded silk banner from the East, probably a relic of crusading, which may be displayed thrice and thrice only to save the house of Macleod from ruin—as it has done twice, and may do once more. Though the young chief was deep in debt, he let wine flow generously,—there being, indeed, no custom-house in Skye,—“and venison came to the table every day in its various forms.”

Boswell could hardly get his unwieldy companion moved from this Capua; but on September 21 they set out on their way back, travelling from the west coast by Ullinish and Talisker, put up by one Macleod or other as best he could; and it made part of Highland hospitality to convoy the guests on to their next shelter. At Talisker, where their host was a colonel in the Dutch service, they met young Maclean of Coll, who henceforth became their cicerone for the southern isles. This promising laird Johnson compared to Peter the Great. He had apprenticed himself to practical farming in England as a school of improvement for the barren islands, on which he was the first to plant turnips, an innovation pronounced by Highland wise-acres “the idle project of an idle head, heated by English fancies.” His father lived at Aberdeen for education of the family, leaving such full power in the hands of the son that he commonly bore the family

Tourists

title of "Coll," like the young Lochiel and Glengarry of '45. To the veriest cit it is hardly needful to explain that a northern laird was known by the name of his property, or a farmer by that of his holding, where indeed certain surnames may be so little distinguishing that in a hive of Campbells, Macleans, or what not, one gets to speak of children as "Johnny Loch so-and-so" or "Jessie Glen this-or-that."

With young Coll they now travelled back to Sleat, looking out for a chance of leaving Skye, which would not present itself every day in any lull of the equinoctial gales. By this time the townsmen, who had expected to slip from island to island as easily as ordering a postchaise, found it was more a question of going where and when they could. Boswell began to fidget about getting back to Edinburgh in time for the legal session, while Johnson in his whimsical moods now talked gaily of fresh adventures, then again grumbled at not being safe and comfortable on the mainland. At Armadale they were entertained more hospitably by his factor than they had been on landing by the now absent Macdonald chieftain, and the people appeared in no haste to get rid of that "honest man" who had done them the honour of coming so far to lecture them. But the wind suddenly changing, on the morning of Sunday, October 3, they were hurried on board a vessel bound for Mull. Soon a storm came on; both the unseasoned voyagers were sea-sick; Boswell was frightened to his prayers; neither of them had anything to eat; and after being

The Highlands and Islands

tossed about all day, even the skipper was glad to run before the wind for Coll, where they cast anchor.

Safely landed, young Coll took them over the island to his own house, a new one which was the best they had seen in the Hebrides, but Johnson's humour was to belittle it as "a tradesman's box." Not being occupied by the old laird, it was hardly in a state to entertain distinguished guests, for whose entertainment Coll collected from his kinsfolk such books as Lucas *On Happiness*, More's *Dialogues*, and Gregory's *Geometry*, that might pass for light reading beside the pocket volume Johnson had laid in at Inverness—Cocker's *Arithmetic*!—Boswell having then equipped himself with Ovid's *Epistles* to "solace many a weary hour." Johnson took interest in the traditions of the family, while his host was forward to show him signs of nascent civilisation, about huts with gardens gathered into a clachan. Coll had a shop and actually a mile of road, not to speak of a school kept in summer by a young man who walked all the way to Aberdeen for the university session. Here the visitors remained imprisoned for a week, then moved down to the harbour to be ready for the sailing of a Campbeltown kelp-ship on which they had engaged passage for Mull. On the morning of the 14th the chance came by a fair breeze, and with Coll in attendance they reached Tobermory at mid-day, just in time to escape the daily gale that kept some dozen ships bound in this harbour.

At Tobermory they found rest in a "tolerable inn," from which Boswell hints how it was not easy to start

Tourists

his companion, while Johnson admits that the eagerness to see Iona, as *bouquet* of their tour, was mainly on Boswell's side. Taking horse, they rode through thick and thin over the northern part of Mull, "a most dolorous country," where Johnson lost the oak stick which he declared to be a valuable piece of timber in such a wilderness. "Your country consists of two things, stone and water. There is indeed a little earth above the stone in some places, but a very little; and the stone is always appearing. It is like a man in rags; the naked skin is still peeping out." Such were the complimentary jests by which Boswell reports him earning from the open-mouthed natives so admiring epithets as "a hogshead of sense" and a "dungeon of wit," where indeed any kind of stranger would be as welcome as a peepshow, and two learned gentlemen from London and Edinburgh made a whole circus.

At night the boat of an Irish vessel obligingly ferried them across to put up with M'Quarrie, "chief of Ulva's isle," about to sell his possessions for debt and to enter the army at the age of sixty-two, with forty years of life still before him. A Campbell, of course, was the purchaser. Next day they went on by boat to Inch Kenneth, where in dwindled state lived Sir Allan Maclean, head of another clan whose star paled before the risen sun of the Campbells. On this island Johnson's heart was cheered by the sight of a cart road, and Boswell's by a parcel of the *Caledonian Mercury*, the first newspaper he had seen for many a day. A little later, on the mainland, they found in a Glasgow paper

The Highlands and Islands

a report that Dr. Johnson was still kept in Skye by bad weather, on which the paragrapher of the period smartly remarked—"Such a philosopher detained on an almost barren island resembles a whale left upon the strand." Could he have heard Goldsmith's happy hit at the stylist who "would make little fishes talk like whales"?

After a day's rest, parting with Coll, they put themselves in charge of his chief, who took them along the coast in an open boat to Iona, till lately his own property, but now sold to the Duke of Argyll. None the less was Maclean welcomed with humble affection by his transferred clansmen, to one of whom, that had offended him by not sending some rum, his bitterest reproach was, "I believe you are a Campbell!" These men belonged to the generation over which their chief had once power of life and death; and to Boswell the culprit protested, "Had he sent his dog for the rum, I would have given it; I would cut my bones for him!" The pilgrims from Fleet Street, who embraced each other on touching this sacred shore, were in too exalted mood to grumble at having to sleep in a barn. In the morning they examined the ruins that stirred Johnson's famous paragraph—"Far be from me and from my friends such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue." At the time Boswell showed himself the more deeply affected, who left his breakfast to return to the cathedral for solitary meditation. "I hoped that, ever after having been in this holy place, I should maintain an exemplary

Tourists

conduct." Johnson mischievously writes to Mrs. Thrale how at Inch Kenneth his disciple had stolen into the ruins there to pray, but was soon scared out by fear of spectres.

Landed again in Mull, they travelled round its south shore by Loch Buy, and on October 22 were ferried across to Oban. Next day they rode on to Inveraray, in bad weather, which almost for the first time moved Johnson to what our generation finds a becoming sentiment. "The wind was low, the rain was heavy, and the whistling of the blast, the fall of the shower, the rush of the cataracts, and the roar of the torrent, made a nobler chorus of the rough music of nature than it had ever been my chance to hear before." In ten miles they crossed fifty-five streams. He was better pleased to come upon a good road that led them to an inn "not only commodious but magnificent," at Inveraray, where "the difficulties of peregrination were now at an end."

The distinguished chiefs who had been taking such notes spent nearly two months on a trip done by the live transatlantic tourist in as many days. They had passed through and near some of the scenic wonders of the kingdom, with as little notice as if these had been Primrose Hill or Turnham Green. Wherever they stopped they made a point of civilly visiting what ruins, antiquities, and such like were on show, but it does not appear that they asked for beauty or sublimity, nor did their guides suggest going out of the way for any prospect beyond that of a bed and a dinner. Boswell

The Highlands and Islands

was the less Cockneyish of the two, who could cry out at sight of an "immense mountain" which Johnson scornfully put in its place as an "immense protuberance"; and we know how he thought one green field as like another as two straws. They did turn aside to see the Falls of Foyers, as to Boswell seems not worth mentioning, while the rough scramble made Johnson wish "that our curiosity might have been gratified with less trouble and danger."

All travellers of that century, till Gray, were much of the same mind. Pennant has small space to waste on Highland scenery, though he so far comes under the *genius loci* as to put his very wide-awake view of the people in the form of a fictitious dream. Burt frankly found the mountains ugly, "most disagreeable when the heather is in bloom"—prodigious! On Raasay Boswell was so frisky as to walk over the island and dance at the top of Duncan, but he has not a word to say about the view. For all their interest in Prince Charlie, nobody took the Fleet Street gentlemen to see his cave near Portree; and but for passing by Kingsburgh they left untouched the north-eastern peninsula of Trotternish, tipped by the Macdonald castle of Duntulm and edged by the long line of precipitous faces showing the giant's teeth of the Storr and such a "nightmare of nature" as the Quiraing. The north-western headland, Vaternish, they skirted to gain the Macleod castle, where Johnson "tasted lotus" at the young chief's board, but was less concerned about the mighty moor-mounds called "Macleod's Tables," and never heard of "Macleod's

Tourists

Maidens," those graceful spires rising sheer out of the sea, nor of that dizzy Waterstein cliff that faces the Atlantic near Dunvegan, and is continued by precipitous walls down to Talisker. He could not help hearing Rorie More's cascade, to which he one day took a toddle between the showers; but neither the bear nor his monkey put himself much about unless to look owlishly at some "Temple of Anaitis," or some cave recalling that of Virgil's Sibyl. Boswell just mentions the Coolins, as reminding him of Corsica, but nobody drew their attention to that wild sierra conspicuous from nearly every part of Skye, an eerie chaos of wrinkled, rusted, ruined tops that "resemble the other hills on the earth's surface as Hindoo deities resemble human beings"; nobody told them of the black lochs and gloomy corries hidden in those storm-breeding recesses; nobody advised them to make the rough tramp up Glen Sligachan or the perilous ascent of Blaaven, or even to look at that highest point whose name titles it Inachievable, as it is not to practised mountaineers of our own time. Two well-to-do gentlemen had not come all the way from London and Edinburgh to distress themselves by going near that "most savage scene of desolation in Britain"—hardly accessible still unless through Loch Scavaig's brighter anteroom, and then shunned by the Skymen as goblin-haunted—the naked hollow of Loch Coruisk, whose uncanny solitude a child then in the nursery would bring to fame as a Highland Acheron:

Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way

The Highlands and Islands

Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,

Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow ;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencoe,

And copse on Cruchan-Ben ;
But here,—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor ought of vegetative power,

The weary eye may ken.
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
As if were here denied

The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain-side.

In coasting Skye, not indeed along the finest stretch, all our ponderous Rambler observed was how the crags made landing difficult, especially for an enemy ; while Boswell cast a glance at “ hills and mountains in gradations of wildness.” The latter, even when not perturbed by a rough sea-passage, owns that he finds “ a difficulty in describing visible objects,” such as those revealing themselves thus to a ready writer of our time :

Here we beheld a sight which seemed the glorious fabric of a vision :—a range of small heights sloping from the deep green sea, every height crowned with a columnar cliff of basalt, and each rising over each, higher and higher, till they ended in a cluster of towering columns, minarets, and spires, over which

Tourists

hovered wreaths of delicate mist, suffused with the pink light from the east. We were looking on the spiral pillars of the Quiraing. In a few minutes the vision had faded; for the yacht was flying faster and faster, assisted a little too much by a savage puff from off the Quiraing's great cliffs; but other forms of beauty arose before us as we went. The whole coast from Aird Point to Portree forms a panorama of cliff-scenery quite unmatched in Scotland. Layers of limestone dip into the sea, which washes them into horizontal forms, resembling gigantic slabs of white and grey masonry, rising sometimes stair above stair, water-stained, and hung with many-coloured weed; and on these slabs stand the dark cliffs and spiral columns: towering into the air like the fretwork of some Gothic temple, roofless to the sky; clustered sometimes together in black masses of eternal shadow; torn open here and there to show glimpses of shining lawns sown in the heart of the stone, or flashes of torrents rushing in silver veins through the darkness; crowned in some places by a green patch, on which the goats feed small as mice; and twisting frequently into towers of most fantastical device, that lie dark and spectral against the grey background of the air. To our left we could now behold the island of Rona, and the northern end of Raasay. All our faculties, however, were soon engaged in contemplating the Storr, the highest part of the northern ridge of Skye, terminating in a mighty insulated rock or monolith which points solitary to heaven, two thousand three hundred feet above the sea, while at its base rock and crag have been torn into the wildest forms by the teeth of earthquake, and a great torrent leaps foaming into the Sound. As we shot past, a dense white vapour enveloped the lower part of the Storr, and towers, pyramids, turrets, monoliths were shooting out above it like a supernatural city in the clouds.

From writers like Robert Buchanan one might quote

The Highlands and Islands

dozens of such enthusiastic descriptions, showing how a later generation has gone back closer to the bosom of Mother Nature than lay that age of wigs and nightcaps. Yet it is those whose play rather than their work takes them into the wilds who are most prone to such new enthusiasm. Now that Skye is somewhat thinly dotted with birch and larch clumps and gardens, and belted with a high-road winding round her deep inlets between groups of houses where church, schoolhouse, and hotel have sprung up beneath cairns and ruins, her inhabitants are rather apt to wonder why strangers give themselves so much trouble in seeking out the most forbidding wilds of their island, that excite their own feelings no more than Cobbett admired Hindhead when he found the roads rough and the soil not suitable for turnips. Those weird scenes which the well-fed Sassenach seeks, as Buchanan says, to "galvanise" his soul with holiday emotion, overshadow the cottar's daily life with poverty, hunger, and dread. Some parts of Skye have now been made comparatively trim and tame, beside others left hopelessly barren and dismal, with peat and rushes for their best crop ; but nowhere perhaps in Britain can one better learn how "nature is not always gracious ; that not always does she outstretch herself in low-lying bounteous lands, over which sober sunsets redden and heavy-uddered cattle low ; but that she has fierce hysterical moods in which she congeals into granite precipice and peak, and draws around herself and her companions the winds that moan and bluster, veils of livid rain." This poor "island of cloud" is indeed

Tourists

most rich in "frozen terror and superstition" for those who have eyes to see.

Between contemporary pilgrims of the picturesque and the dull observers of older days, came to Skye an invasion of geologists and such like, who did much towards proclaiming its grand points. One of the pioneers of scientific invasion was the Frenchman Faujas de St. Fond, who does not shine in the orthography of Scottish names. But of these explorers one need not speak here, unless to distinguish that humorous and hard-headed savant MacCulloch, whose hammer was brought to bear on many time-weathered sentiments. His *Western Islands* is more strictly geological, but his *Highlands and Western Isles* is full of rollicking pages, though stuffed rather too much with learned facetiousness, which would have tickled Mr. Shandy, while it may prove hard reading "when, in after ages, the youths of Polynesia shall be flogged into English and Gaelic as we have been into Greek and Latin"—a sentence that appears rough sketch for a more celebrated Mac's New Zealander. Macaulay may also have lifted the formula, "every schoolboy knows," from this author, who varies that phrase by "the merest schoolboy" or "the minutest Grecian," and in more boldly laying down "all the world knows what Callimachus says," will not recommend himself to a generation better acquainted with Macaulay's dicta and dogmata than with what song the Sirens sang, or what tartan Achilles wore when he seems to have disguised himself in a kilt. Another famous saying, that has

The Highlands and Islands

become a *cliché* in our day, as to the South Sea islanders' trade of taking in one another's washing, seems adumbrated by MacCulloch's wonder how Highland shopkeepers contrive to keep open, "unless they have agreed to live on gingerbread kings and carraway comfits, and to buy all their pins and tape from each other." And for a final sample of this author's shrewd wit, let us hear that "never have books been so black, so thick, so large and so long, as when they have been written about nothings." This warning spurs me on from digressions that might be extended to a folio—

Heavy and thick as a wall of brick,
But not so heavy and not so thick
As—

some volumes of travel one could mention.

One need not waste many words on the Cockney tourists who get the length of Skye to stare at the children's bare legs and to sniff at the peat fires, such admiration as they are capable of being directed by tourist tickets and guide-books. By Cockneyism I do not mean citizenship of the world's greatest city; indeed it is not for me to file the international nest that has grown so big round the sound of Bow Bells. To be a right Cockney is to be impotent of any outlook but from our own Charing Cross or other restricted observatory, in which moral sense we are all by nature Cockneys, some more, some less. There are Cockneys of time as well as of place. The eighteenth was very much of a Cockney century, hoodwinked by its own wigs, nightcaps, pews, quartos, and other

Tourists

indispensable institutions. The nineteenth century has taken pains to foster a more catholic spirit ; but some of its sons are slow to learn how poor is their little duck puddle or brackish lochan beside the ocean that goes round the earth, itself a drop in that inconceivable immensity of forces and phenomena against which the brightest human life flies out to die like the tiniest peat spark.

To my mind some of the most offensive Cockneys are those who never drop the *h* of "Hail Columbia !" I am not specially dotting the *i*'s of this remark for a certain couple that some years ago undertook to make Johnson's tour on foot, then, finding the weather chill and wet, came back to publish an ill-humoured and well-illustrated book that got them into critical hot water. Still less need one have anything but a thousand welcomes for the American travellers who are travellers indeed, who look through glasses of knowledge and sympathy rather than through prejudiced goggles dulling every prospect, seen as from the rush of a motor-car. But there is a kind of U.S.A. bookmaker, who very much "fancies" his acuteness, bounded on one side by the spelling-book and on the other by the sensational newspaper ; and such a smart descendant of ours has no shame in exposing his narrow-mindedness while exulting over the nakedness of his grandfatherland. Boswell did not write himself down an ass more plainly than some note-takers I could quote, whose standard of measurement seems always the Capitol at Washington, the water tower of Chicago, the Nob Hill of 'Frisco, or some other

The Highlands and Islands

universal hub of their self-satisfaction. What they always cry out upon is the poverty, the shiftlessness, the backwardness of Highland homes, for which they go on to blame the landlords as tyrants unscrupulous as Tammany bosses, or Western evictors of Nez Percés Indians. Their pity for the poor does them credit; but much of it is wasted by complacent philanthropists unable to conceive how life may be worth living without ice-cream, elevators, political "machines," hourly newspaper editions, endless Stock Exchange tapes, and the like necessities of high-toned civilisation. To this kind of transatlantic tripper who comes hurriedly poking into lordly hall and smoky hovel, peeping with such an uppish air on our manners and customs as if we were Sandwich Islanders, one would say *Procul este profani!* but of course one might as well try to scare a yellow-press reporter with a notice to trespassers. And when the like of him has published his hasty impressions, these may make wholesome study for us as showing how our ancient idols strike a stranger from some exceedingly "up to date" standpoint.

To find the western islands described with insight and sympathy one can go to the writers above quoted, and to Miss Gordon Cumming's *Hebrides*, which I have not quoted on Skye, for fear of being tempted to deck my grey page unduly in borrowed plumes as from some bird of paradise. She was doubly a Highlander by blood, who could also inform her survey with comparisons wide-drawn from other lands. Buchanan, I fear, was



THE FALLS OF SPEAN, INVERNESS-SHIRE.

Tourists

born south of the Border, yet his forebears must have heard the slogan of the wild Macfarlanes on Loch Lomond. As for Alexander Smith, unless descended from some Highland Gow, such as that Hal who fought on the Inch of Perth, he may frankly be set down for a Sassenach, a Kilmarnock body "at that"; but this poet's prose is thick set with Highlands of fancy; and no book of the kind makes better reading than his *Summer in Skye*. All these writers, by the way, have a good word for Dr. Johnson, who so roughly abused their country; and when I consider how that worthy did penance at Uttoxeter for a sin of his youth, I am half-minded to humble myself on the cutty-stool as else unable to look up to one whom so many better men have judged great and wise.

CHAPTER VII

LOCHABER NO MORE !

For a century and a half claymore and dirk have rusted all over the Highlands, where ben and glen echo the report of breechloading guns, and the gaff gleams and the reel whirrs by loch or river. But peace, too, has her cruelties ; and some of the misery once brought into mountain glens by fierce raiders came again through spectacled and moralising economists, who with more or less good intentions displaced, shuffled, and banished a population deeply rooted in love of their Lochabers. Dr. Johnson foresaw in part what would result from the change of patriarchal community to business relations between dependants of whose inveterate troubles he was ignorant, and chiefs whom he found on the point of degenerating into "rapacious landlords." Another tourist, a generation later, remarked that clan loyalty hung much on the fact of the people being tenants at will, and that long leases would put an end to the old dependence. Johnson was not so shrewd in judging that the people would haste to expatriate themselves as soon as they saw a way open to lands "less bleak

Lochaber no More !

and barren than their own." The Celt's love for his home and his hatred for change made the course of improvement to run rougher here than in the Lowlands. And the Highland "improvements," for which the ground was cleared by bayonets, brought little good to many of the people. They found it harder to pay rent in money than in blood and affection. Their chiefs proved as often selfishly exacting as the clansmen ignorant and obstinate. The white-faced sheep that nibbled away the romance of the Highlands were more the charge or the profit of intruding Sassenachs. Since the price of wool went down, sheep have much given way to deer, that profit no one but the owners of high-rented shootings, and keep cottars sitting up all night to guard their poor fields, preserved for the sport of absentee lords or purse-proud strangers, whose worst service to the country has been turning the free son of the mist into a well-fed menial, broken in to touch his hat for the tips he levies in lieu of blackmail. It is stated that the demoralescent Celt does not so much object to deer forests, as barring out his old enemy the sheep farmer, and as bringing into the country a class of men who spend freely, sometimes in the way of bribes given to secure good sport among herds that to a sportsman of Colquhoun's stamp seemed almost as tame as sheep.

The Highlander asked for bread, and his masters gave him sometimes stones and sometimes sovereigns. Not that his old masters had done much better for him, minus the sovereigns. If the Highlands had once

The Highlands and Islands

a golden age, that was, as in other quarters of the world, before the day of facts and figures. I had gathered some thorny points to prick the bubble of an ideal state of society before the coming of the Sassenach ; but the reader will find this better done in the last chapter of Mr. Andrew Lang's *Companions of Pickle*, showing what tyranny and savagery held together in that good old time of romance. The late Duke of Argyll's work on the former condition of Scotland, though written with a natural bias, is not to be sneered at by sentimentalists. And if readers wish evidence at first hand they may take a tour with Pennant or any of the early observers, who will show them what it was to be counted among the live stock of a paternal chief.

The sentimental quarrel is with civilisation, which all along has proceeded by ascertaining and enclosing rights of property. Socialism, which to us sounds new, is of course old as the hills, that once, after a manner, belonged to a whole clan in their different degrees of advantage, till some other sept could effectually evict them by fire and sword. There never was a time when the leader of the conquering troop did not get the best of what was going. The land held in his name he was in the way of giving out in large portions to his captains and kinsfolk, the "tacksmen" of Highland farms, who in turn sublet small holdings to the inferior clansmen, rent being paid in kind or in service to superiors, often arbitrarily oppressive, as seemed their right. The shortcomings of this economy were made up for by plunderings of neighbours, a feature not

Lochaber no More !

usually put into the foreground of Arcadian pictures, but so common and so perilous as to keep a regular check on prolific population. There was a general community of interests, of manners, of sympathy which smoothed down social differences. The humblest clansman, born or adopted into the guild, expected to be provided for somehow or other, while the chief's power and dignity depended on the number of "pretty men" he could keep about him. When the resources of plunder and blackmail were cut off, the mass of Highlanders had to live by cultivating small patches of poor land, as they did wastefully, idly, and unprofitably, usually on the old system of "runrig," by which a joint farm was tilled in common, but each ridge had its own occupier. As a rule they were practically tenants-at-will, holding directly or indirectly from the head of the clan.

Badly off as they were, the tenants obstinately withstood almost all attempts towards a better state of things. The improvements that in a century changed the face of Scotland and multiplied its wealth, came from lairds won over to economic science ; they could hardly have been carried out but by men who had risen above prejudices and were in a position to risk capital in experiments. In the Highlands, more obstinately than in the Lowlands, there was a deadlock between the ignorant conservatism of the lower class and the enlightened self-interest of the upper, who were sometimes so imperfectly enlightened as to show grasping haste to be rich, whatever became of those

The Highlands and Islands

born to dependence on their fathers. On the other hand, unenlightened selfishness, good neither for man nor beast, came as natural to crofter as to laird, among a race noted for what Matthew Arnold calls its "passionate, turbulent, indomitable reaction against the despotism of fact."

These seem to be moral and historical facts. Then come the considerations of a science in our day much decried for dismal. I am not going to enter into vexed economical controversies. The subject of the Highland clearances offers a good many considerations on both sides. Sentimental arguments are nearly all on the side of the evicted ; but the evictors have much to say for themselves. The slovenly agriculture of the clans had to be schooled sooner or later. The pig-headed prejudices of those backward cultivators appears in the fact that their now indispensable potato was almost forced upon them. The sheep farming that ousted scanty and precarious crops paid best on a large scale. There are mountain wildernesses fit not even for sheepwalks, where deer-runs make as profitable employment as may be. It proved often a kind cruelty that drove thousands from their half-starved life to a more roomy lot in pastures new. But for this movement the Highlands would have shared the full horrors of the Irish famine, felt here also to some extent after the potato disease of 1846. The landlord need not be blamed for taking in cash an equivalent of the services and the personal loyalty lost to him through operation of law. Small tenants often did him as little good as

Lochaber no More !

for themselves. The gist of the whole question, indeed, is whether the land thrives best in the hands of any one grade of occupier, or whether there is not more room for all when large, middle-sized, and small proprietors or tenants are mingled as in other walks of life. That question I leave to those who have much to say on it. But this may be said by the weakest statistician, that the changes introduced into the Highlands were often carried out with a haste and harshness specially painful in the case of a race so inapt at adapting itself to new circumstances, whose poor household gods, like Charles Lamb's, "plant a terrible fixed foot," and "do not willingly seek Lavinian shores." So, as one can now indulge Jacobite sentiment without practical treason to the House of Hanover, the reader may be invited to join chorus in the wail of "Lochaber no more !" so often raised in Highland glens.

That pathetic lament seems to date back to Dutch William's days, when it is suspected for the work of an English officer, though another account gives it a becomingly native origin. Emigration from the Highlands, voluntary or enforced, set in before Culloden. The Hudson's Bay Company had recruited its servants from hardy Orkney-men and Hebridean islanders. Between 1715 and 1745, while the ill-used Scots of Ulster were knitting a chain of British outposts along the Alleghanies, philanthropic General Oglethorpe took out a number of Highlanders to his Georgia colony; others settled in North Carolina and in New York; and it is said that some of these exiles

The Highlands and Islands

still kept up their Gaelic a generation ago, though it does not appear that the Stars and Stripes afford a pattern for tartans. When Aberdeen bailies connived at the kidnapping of children for the "plantations," arbitrary chiefs like old Lovat did not stick at getting rid of troublesome vassals by selling them into the same servitude, to which Covenanters and other rebels had been transported in the previous century. Proscribed rebels naturally sought refuge in the New World, where rebellion of another stamp would soon be in fashion ; then it is notable that these exiles were apt to take the side of the king *de facto*.

The exodus was accelerated after the crushing of the Jacobite clans, when travellers like David Balfour could often see an emigrant ship freighting with heavy hearts in Highland harbours, else little frequented. Pennant, who speaks of "epidemic migrations" in other islands, states that a thousand people had left Skye before his visit. Soldiers who had served in America spread through their native glens report of a distant land of milk and honey. Large bodies were led into hopeful exile by the tacksmen who had been their immediate landlords, or by the priests of the Catholic clans. Emigrant agents used arts of cajolery, and in some cases, it is said, carried off youngsters by fraud or even force. The American Revolution checked this migration for a time, then diverted its course to Canada. Towards the end of the century the movement could be spoken of as a "rage" or an undesirable "spirit" which deserved curbing by law.

Lochaber no More !

But till after that period the chiefs were seldom concerned to get rid of the vassals whose hereditary attachment still gave them consequence, and by whose hands they hoped to reap more solid advantages. One of Johnson's hosts spoke of emigration as deserting, a view which the sage of Fleet Street found quite reasonable. One of Burns's bitterest pasquinades attacks the Highland Society as concerting means (1786) to hinder some hundreds of Glengarry men in an "audacious" design of escape to Canada "from their lawful lords and masters."

It was prosperous sheep farming that gave a main impetus to the shifting of idle hands thrown out of employment ; while the pacific settling down of the Highlands would increase the mouths to be fed, as in India, under the *pax Britannica*, humane war against natural checks on population has multiplied a people always tending to press upon their means of subsistence. The lamb was in Scotland not only an emblem but a pledge of peace. The substitution of sheep for more easily driven cattle had in half a century or so gone to quiet and scatter the Border clans, once as keen for booty and bloodshed as those of the Highlands ; yet no minstrel bemoans the depopulation of Ettrick and Liddesdale. The Highlanders in historical times had small hairy sheep as well as flocks of goats ; but their best stock used to be the small black cattle, whose blood they would sometimes draw to mix with oatmeal in seasons of scarcity, and might starve outright when those lean herds were raided by as hungry neighbours.

The Highlands and Islands

All through the eighteenth century the keeping of an improved breed of sheep in large flocks had been spreading northward from the Borders, largely displacing cattle in upland districts where such enterprising drovers as Rob Roy had not to be reckoned with. Into the Highlands this change would often be introduced by strangers placed upon forfeited estates, a fact not recommending it to the natives. Chiefs and lairds who followed the new system were at first laughed at as wiseacres like to lose their money ; but the clansmen found it no laughing matter when sheep were found to pay better than humble homes, and more and more small tenants had rough notice that their room was needed rather than their company. Scott tells us how his first acquaintance with the Trossachs was in leading a party of soldiers to evict a family believed unwilling to carry out a bargain made for their removal. Between the local Cains and the intruding Abels ill-feeling, quarrels, outrages could not but result, which in many cases went with little notice as but too like the state of society just passed away. In 1792 a number of hot-headed Ross and Sutherland men proclaimed at several parish churches that on a certain day all the sheep were to be driven out of these two counties beyond the Beauly River. Some two hundred men undertook to carry out this clearance, and went on for days driving off sheep in thousands till they were encountered by the sheriff with a military force, when most of the raiders took to their heels. A few prisoners, tried at Inverness, were

Lochaber no More !

sentenced to various punishments ; but public opinion was so strong on their side that they seem to have been helped out of jail, no great zeal for their recapture being shown by the authorities.

This is perhaps the most remarkable ebullition of a grudge hot all over the Highlands then, and not quite cool in our own day. Sheep-stealing on a small scale was common, the crofters and the shepherds retorting the blame on each other. Another sore point was the small tenants' cattle or ponies straying on to their old pastures and being impounded or chased off to destruction on rocky ground. A brighter feature of the revolution came through the placing of poor farmers on hitherto barren mosses which they were helped and guided in transforming to fertile land. But too many landlords, in their haste to be rich, acted with a disastrous want of consideration for those who had hitherto looked on them as an earthly providence, bound to make up for the deficiencies of nature, and who were naturally slow to accept Lowland conceptions of landed property.

To many a Gael his native land seemed no longer worth living in now that the "law had reached Ross-shire." As yet the landlords did little to help away their dependants to New World fields. One philanthropic nobleman, Lord Selkirk, distinguished himself by his zeal in colonising the wilds of Canada. He began by settling some hundreds of Highlanders in the comparatively mild climate of the St. Lawrence mouth. His more ambitious scheme was in the Red

The Highlands and Islands

River valley. But his agents here served him ill ; his claims were disputed by the North-Western Fur Company ; and the clansmen whom he sent to this remote wilderness found themselves in for a petty civil war, after half a century's want of practice. The colony was broken up by hostile force ; but Selkirk, like a true Douglas, would not own himself beaten. He raised a small private army from soldiers thrown out of employment at the end of the British-American war of 1812, retook his chief station, Fort Douglas, and there laid the foundations of what is now the flourishing province of Manitoba. About the time of his death in 1820 there entered the field another Scottish recruiter, Gregor MacGregor, the Venezuelan General, who proclaimed himself Cacique of Poyais in Central America, raising a loan on that title, granting lordships, commissions, orders of chivalry, issuing banknotes, and promising mounts and marvels to his future subjects. But imagination and paper money were the main assets of his enterprise ; and the few hundreds he deluded, most of them from Scotland, reached the Mosquito shore only to perish of fever or starvation till rescued by the authorities of Honduras. The fate of this ill-conducted attempt, reviving memories of the older Darien disaster, must have gone to check emigration at a time when there was sore need of such a remedy.

The most notorious and far-spread clearing off of the population was that carried out in Sutherland in the second and third decades of last century. Nearly the whole of this county belonged to an infant

Lochaber no More !

Countess, who grew up to marry the rich English Marquis of Stafford, eventually created Duke of Sutherland. They resolved to improve their vast northern estate by giving up the interior to sheep, the inhabitants moved to a fringe of small holdings on the sea-coast, where a small farm could be eked out by fishery. The matter seems fairly enough stated by Hugh Miller, though a hot advocate on the popular side :

Here is a vast tract of land, furnished with two distinct sources of wealth. Its shores may be made the seats of extensive fisheries, and the whole of its interior parcelled out into productive sheep farms. All is waste in its present state ; it has no fisheries, and two-thirds of its internal produce is consumed by the inhabitants. It had contributed, for the use of the community and the landlord, its large herds of black cattle ; but the English family saw, and, we believe, saw truly, that for every one pound of beef which it produced, it could be made to produce two pounds of mutton, and perhaps a pound of fish in addition. And it was resolved, therefore, that the inhabitants of the central districts, who, as they were mere Celts, could not be transformed, it was held, into store farmers, should be marched down to the seaside, there to convert themselves into fishermen, on the shortest possible notice, and that a few farmers of capital, of the industrious Lowland race, should be invited to occupy the new subdivisions of the interior. And, pray, what objections can be urged against so liberal and large-minded a scheme ? The poor inhabitants of the interior had very serious objections to urge against it. Their humble dwellings were of their own rearing ; it was they themselves who had broken in their little fields from the waste ; from time immemorial, far beyond the reach of history, had they possessed

The Highlands and Islands

their mountain holdings,—they had defended them so well of old that the soil was still virgin ground, in which the invader had found only a grave; and their young men were now in foreign lands, fighting at the command of their chieftainness the battles of their country, not in the character of hired soldiers, but of men who regarded these very holdings as their stake in the quarrel. To them, then, the scheme seemed fraught with the most flagrant, the most monstrous injustice. Were it to be suggested by some Chartist convention in a time of revolution that Sutherland might be still further improved, that it was really a piece of great waste to suffer the revenues of so extensive a district to be squandered by one individual; that it would be better to appropriate them to the use of the community in general; that the community in general might be still further benefited by the removal of the one said individual from Dunrobin to a roadside, where he might be profitably employed in breaking stones; and that this new arrangement could not be entered on too soon—the noble Duke would not be a whit more astonished, or rendered a whit more indignant, by the scheme, than were the Highlanders of Sutherland by the scheme of his predecessor.

It is believed that the ducal couple were not fully aware of the suffering caused by their innovations. The poor Highlanders could not believe that it was intended to root them from their homes like weeds. They took little notice of warnings and summonses, till in many cases the agents of authority appeared to thrust them out by force, the most effectual method being to pull down or set fire to their wretched hovels, turning hundreds of families out to the mercy of the weather. Their heath pastures had been first burned off; and they were not always allowed time to save

Lochaber no More !

their small stock and crops. Violence hastened the end of many infirm old people ; and even strong men, it is stated, lost their health through hardships that bred fever and other diseases. Except in one or two instances there appears to have been no attempt at forcible resistance, while the executors of such rough policy, provoked by the passive obstinacy of the evicted, often worked themselves up to a brutal temper of destruction. So violent were their proceedings that one of the Sutherland factors, Mr. Sellar, had in 1816 to stand his trial at Inverness on the charge of culpable homicide and fire-raising. He was acquitted ; and the work of eviction went on unchecked under a new agent, Mr. Loch, who in print defended this agrarian revolution, and gained the verdict of the voting class in his election to Parliament. Another factor concerned in those notorious evictions lived to tell in our time that he had received hundreds of letters from the colonies thanking him for apparent harshness that turned out a blessing in the end.

At the time the soreness was intense. Almost the only magistrates in the county were those large stranger tenants, oppressors as they seemed, who would take care to do themselves justice. The Established Church ministers were also on the landlord's side, as a rule, accused by the opposite party as having been bribed through the favour of the class to which they inclined to be subservient, and especially by advantages given to their glebes in the redistribution of land. This character of Erastian worldliness fastened upon the

The Highlands and Islands

Old Kirk largely accounted for the success of the Free Church in the Highlands, the latter's sympathy having commonly gone with the people, who found an eloquent champion in Hugh Miller, ex-mason and Editor of the *Witness*. The best-known contemporary account of the Sutherland evictions is Donald Macleod's *Gloomy Memories*, letters written to an Edinburgh paper by another mason lad, who, like fellow-sympathisers, was practically expelled from the district for denouncing the landlords' agents. His book, reprinted at home and in Canada, and included in Mr. Alexander Mackenzie's *History of the Highland Clearances*, is very angry in its tone; but impartial judgment can hardly be expected from one who has witnessed such a sight as this :

Strong parties for each district, furnished with faggots and other combustibles, rushed on the dwellings of this devoted people, and immediately commenced setting fire to them, proceeding in their work with the greatest rapidity till about three hundred houses were in flames ! The consternation and confusion were extreme ; little or no time was given for removal of persons or property—the people striving to remove the sick or helpless before the fire should reach them—next, struggling to save the most valuable of their effects. The cries of the women and children—the roaring of the affrighted cattle, hunted at the same time by the yelling dogs of the shepherds amid the smoke and fire—altogether presented a scene that completely baffles description : it required to be seen to be believed. A dense cloud of smoke enveloped the whole country by day, and even extended far on the sea ; at night an awfully grand but terrific scene presented itself—all the houses in an



Mr. Sunde's
Farm, near the river, 1880

Lochaber no More !

extensive district in flames at once ! I myself ascended a height about eleven o'clock in the evening, and counted two hundred and fifty blazing houses, many of the owners of which were my relations, and all of whom I personally knew, but whose present condition, whether in or out of the flames, I could not tell. The conflagration lasted six days, till the whole of the dwellings were reduced to ashes or smoking ruins. During one of these days a boat lost her way in the dense smoke as she approached the shore ; but at night she was enabled to reach a landing-place by the light of the flames !

The clearances carried out, the people had a fresh tale of sufferings to bear in addition to the want and sickness engendered by their removal. The bewildered tenants had hastily to build houses on their new allotments, often on unsuitable or unhealthy sites ; and it was some time before, on the whole, they began to find themselves unwillingly more comfortable than in their moorland hovels. They might have to shake down among new neighbours, all cramped for room on thin soil. On a rough and stormy coast, most of them had to be apprenticed to the trade of fishing, on which for the future they must partly depend ; and at first shell-fish picked from the rocks might be their best diet. Even after they had learned to be bold and skilful fishermen, the herring and the harvest might fail together, as they did in one black season, bringing the bulk of the population to starvation but for charitable aid. It was small comfort to them to see the prosperity of the large Lowland sheep-farmers who had supplanted them. The Duchess of Sutherland made some generous

The Highlands and Islands

attempts at clarifying the misery she had shaken up ; but her occasional visits could not instruct her fully as to the state of things, and she is said to have been hoodwinked and misled by the factors whom the people, rightly or wrongly, looked on as their real tyrants.

'Tis not the distant Emperor they fear,
But the proud viceroy who is ever near !

These "doers," indeed, were often to be pitied rather, who, perhaps against their own sympathies, had to set hand to what seemed the dirty work of absentee proprietors. The clansmen appear never to have quite lost their hereditary feeling for their superior, even during these few years when three thousand families were driven from 800,000 acres of land to make room for sheep, which in turn have largely been displaced by deer.¹

Forty years ago the *Economist* stated that the same change had been worked on two millions of acres in Scotland, where fertile as well as unfertile land has been artificially made a wilderness, as the New Forest was by William the Conqueror. From Glentilt, from Lochaber, from Strathglass, from Glenorchy, from Glenelg, from Rannoch, and from many another beloved glen and strath, the people were pressed or driven forth by the pastoral invasion of strangers. Lairds who held out against the movement would often be impoverished, had perhaps themselves to

¹ It ought to be remembered that in a later generation the Sutherland family sank at least a quarter of a million pounds in trying to reclaim thousands of acres that to a great extent ran back to their native wildness.

Lochaber no More !

emigrate ; then their properties passed into the hands of new men, not so scrupulous in ridding the land of unprofitable human stock. In the course of last century owners grew willing to promote the emigration which they had formerly tried to check, and found it a cheap charity to ship off to America at their own expense the inconvenient dependants who now showed more reluctance to seek sunnier climes, stiffly sticking in their mud under a rainfall that on the coast is sometimes over 100 inches per annum. Visitors to Strathpeffer may see how the crofter has a fairer chance on the east side of the Grampians, that fence him against Atlantic clouds.

In the wet and windy Hebrides the same change has been pushed, but not so thoroughly in some parts, while in others very forcible means of eviction were used both by man and by nature. The people of the isles and on secluded stretches of the opposite coast are less touched by the spirit of the age, more like the Highlanders who fought for Prince Charlie. They are sprinkled, indeed, with mainlanders settled here, and with waifs of shipwreck and fishery. Interlopers and natives thrive for a time through the kelp industry, whose decline left too many mouths with too little provision. Some islands have passed into the hands of philanthropic strangers, who spend large sums on ameliorating the condition of the inhabitants, often with the proverbial result of good intentions. Liberality seems to breed new hydra-heads of poverty among a people satisfied with a low standard of well-being, and

The Highlands and Islands

bent on clinging limpet-like to a soil that will not support their increase. Family affection, close knitted, for Donald, "in the condensation of his focal circle," keeps sons trying to scrape a living from the patch of ground on which their parents could barely rear them. Thus each of the islands makes a petty Ireland, where periodic cries of famine go to justify the policy of clearance. The blame is loudly laid on landlords ; but it remains to be seen whether the tinkering of the Crofters' Commission will effectually solder all the "ifs" and "ands" that are offered to make a Highland Arcadia. The Commissioners have used a free hand, cutting down rents "with a hatchet," wiping off old scores of arrears and compulsorily marking out holdings of arable and pasture land, which should pay if Nature be a party to the arrangement, especially as the subdivision of holdings is forbidden, which did so much mischief by beating out the thin lot of semi-starvation. The Congested Districts Board has recently bought 70,000 acres in Skye, on which may be carried out such an experiment in State landlordism as under more favourable circumstances has not yet given new heavens and a new earth to less congested areas of the world.

The Crofters' Holdings Act of 1886 was taken as a treaty of peace, that seems not beyond danger of being broken between landlord and tenant. Already in some cases where a clean sheet has been made, arrears begin to gather again, so that we may soon hear fresh ugly stories of eviction and riot. Unfortunately, of late years newspapers, political agitators, and

Lochaber no More !

contact with more prosperous society have inflamed the grievances of the people to a chronic sullenness, smouldering up from time to time in inhuman outrages on cattle and futile resistance to legal proceedings, which are only too much of a return towards the good old times. The Celt, as wrong-headed as he is warm-hearted, much agrees with that typical Saxon, Mr. Tulliver, in connecting lawyers with some Ossianic variant of Old Harry. If Donald had more sense of humour he would not make martyrs of men lightly punished for attacking sheriffs' officers in the exercise of their duty in very trying circumstances. So strong is clannishness still, that from all over Scotland, and beyond the seas, come help and sympathy for the outbreaks of abuse, outrage, and perverse stupidity, that seem the lees of the old devotion, refined to such a noble spirit by poets. But the Highlander of our time has not taken to Irish assassination, as at the date of a Campbell factor's murder by Alan Breck or James Stewart, or whom ? and that remoter date when those early "improvers," the young Macdonalds of Keppoch, were killed by their own kinsmen for the crime of being able to teach their grandfathers.

Again, I have shirked all controversy as to land laws and systems of agriculture. But, turning to facts, we can see the effect of the evicting regime. Over the thoroughly cleared districts the people are as well off as in other parts of Scotland, in material circumstances at least far ahead of the dirty, starving, and quarrelling Highlanders described by Burt,

The Highlands and Islands

Pennant, and Johnson. What they have lost in spirit, romance, loyalty, and other sentiments is not so easy to estimate. Their well-being has certainly come at expense of their numbers. While the population of Scotland has in a century nearly tripled itself, that of the Highland counties has in several cases remained almost stationary or even decreased, the people, too, as elsewhere, being more concentrated in towns and villages. The question is whether the landlords have not on the whole done no better for themselves than for as many of the people as could here find welfare.

A further question, for the nation, relates to the fact that this semi-civilised world of ours has not yet entered upon Herbert Spencer's golden age of mutual contract, since the most Christian and Catholic potentates are still fain to settle their disputes at a game in which Highlanders once took a willing hand. Should we not breed food for powder rather than sheep and deer? The idea seems to be that snug burgesses of the south might sit comfortably at home, thinking imperially and sentimentally, while those hardy mountaineers went out to fight for them with due applause from newspaper readers. Alas! the Gael, whether thriving or starving, no longer shows his ancestral readiness to go and be killed, at any king's or chief's bidding; and his Free Church pastors do not recommend army life.

During the half-century or so after Culloden fifty battalions had been raised in the Highlands to serve the Guelphs more effectively than their fathers had

Lochaber no More !

served the Stuarts. Norman Macleod recalls that in the wars of the French Revolution, besides thousands of soldiers and scores of officers sent to the regular army, Argyll had three regiments of Fencibles and a company of volunteers in every parish. Since the beginning of those wars he counts up 21 generals, 48 colonels, 600 other commissioned officers, and 10,000 soldiers as sprung from the poor island of Skye alone, where, a century ago, half the farms were held by half-pay veterans. Another writer asserts that 1600 Skyemen stood in the squares of Waterloo. But even some years before Waterloo half a dozen kilted regiments had been reduced to trousers for want of recruits ; and in our day it is too seldom that the real Highlander has heart or mind to enlist, now that—

The land, that once with groups of happy clansmen teemed,
Who with a kindly awe revered the clan's protecting head,
Lies desolate, and stranger lords, by vagrant pleasure led,
Track the lone deer, and for the troops of stalwart men
One farmer and one forester people the joyless glen.

This poet of course rather shirks the fact that the clansmen, if "happy," "kindly," and so forth, were like to be so at the expense of other "revering" clansmen and their ineffectually "protecting head." At all events, they have little reverence left for "stranger lords."

The resentful men who once made our plaided and plumed array have passed rather into the ranks of labour in Glasgow, London, and other large towns. Not a few of them indeed have gone into sea-service,

The Highlands and Islands

as shown by the Royal Naval Reserve at Stornoway. Many have sought better fortunes in Australia, New Zealand, all over the world. I was at school with a Highland laird's sons, who for years went kenspeckle, like Lord Brougham, in a succession of shepherd's-plaid nether garments off the same web, sent home from the plains of Otago by a loyal ex-tenant. But for three or four generations the special promised land of Highlanders has been Canada, a region of hills, woods, rivers, and lakes, in which the Celt learns soon to feel at home ; and when he comes in sight of the Rocky Mountains he hails a new, a greater, a brighter Lochaber rising up to the gates of heaven, where whole clans of angelic pipers, tartan-winged, will welcome him at last with all their pibrochs played in one celestial chorus.

Across the Atlantic, the sea-sick and home-sick emigrants' troubles were not always over at once. They had often to suffer sorely from ill-laid plans, or from want of plans, throwing them on the charity of a new country. The new lairds, who were glad to get rid of them, thought they did enough in paying the passage of helpless glensmen thrown among bewildering scenes. But every fresh Highlander landed was a friend to those who followed his example ; and in a country that has room for half a dozen Scotlands it would be a hale and hearty man's own fault if he did not soon clear out for himself a home and livelihood free from help or hindrance of chief as of factor. Their present prosperity is attested by the fact that "Mac" seems almost a title for Canadian statesmen,

Lochaber no More !

and by names of towns and counties scattered over the Dominion—Macdonald, Mackenzie, Dundas, Lennox, Inverness, Seaforth, Gareloch, Wallace, and of course Campbeltown. In travelling by train through Ontario the Scottish wanderer's heart may come into his mouth at the familiar sound of station after station. Clans have in some parts settled down together, the Catholic ones keeping their priests and least forgetting the language in which they continue to pray. Many of these exiles not only cherish their Gaelic but, it appears, the particular dialect of their original district, handed down to generations that never set foot on Scottish soil. To-day there is perhaps more Gaelic spoken in Canada than in all Scotland. There is also a clan of French-speaking Macs, descended from Highland soldiers who married and settled among the daughters of Heth.

Those Canadians who have given in to the conquering Saxon tongue make up for such defection by an earnest cult of bagpipes, kilts, and reels, flaunting red knees in a clime of blue noses, and lustily singing the songs of Caledonian Sion in what is now no strange land. The Dominion rears battalions of kilted warriors, that skirl defiance to the mosquetry of summer as to the winter snows. Britain was some years ago visited by a Canadian "Kiltie" Band, three score strong, making on Sassenach platforms such a revived show of tartan as is hardly to be seen in all the Highlands. One of them, belonging to the MacAnak clan, stood seven feet high, a hopeful sign of what the race may

The Highlands and Islands

grow to in its new home, when Old Scotland has been given up to American millionaires, English tourists, and German waiters. Of such tuneful transatlantic Scotians one need not inquire too curiously whether "Annie Laurie" or "Robin Adair" would find themselves at home in kilts ; but they ought to know what a blot on their fame is the tartan of the Gordons, my hereditary enemies, whose flagrant stripes brand them as no better, in their beginning, than Lowland evictors. One thinks twice about pursuing an ancestral feud against foemen seven feet high ; but I must say that if these minstrels were real Gordons, they might well chant masses for the souls of many a Celt who never had the chance to sing :

From the lone shieling on the misty island,
Mountains divide us and a waste of seas ;
But still our hearts are true, our hearts are Highland,
And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.

Anyhow, Gordons and Forbesees, Campbells and Camerons, Macdonalds, Mackenzies, and MacAdams, with many others who had half forgotten their Highland blood and wholly their ancient feuds, showed themselves chips of the old block when from Canada, Africa and the Antipodes they came rushing home to stand side by side where their freshly dyed tartans were stained to much the same pattern in the blood of their fatherland's enemies.

CHAPTER VIII

THE OUTER HEBRIDES

SKYE is now the "show island" of the west coast, easily invaded by its ferries, at one being only a musket-shot's distance from the mainland. But comparatively few tourists trust themselves across the stormy Minches, Great and Little, to visit the Long Island, more foreign to thriving Scotland than Jersey to England. One used to be told that the Minch was *La Manche*, the Highland Channel, as the *Kyles* so frequent here called cousins with straits of Calais; but a pundit of the Oxford Dictionary shakes his head at these as at most popular interpretations of place-names. The 120-mile chain of islands making a breakwater for north-western Scotland, with the Sunday name of the Outer Hebrides, is commonly spoken of as the Long Island, that once indeed formed one stretch of land, and still at some parts is cut only by fords passable at low tide. The name Long Island should perhaps be restricted to the northern mass of Lewis and Harris, below which, across the Sound of Harris, the smaller separate isles taper out southwards like the tail of a kite, tipped by the

The Highlands and Islands

lighthouse on Bernera shining thirty miles across the Atlantic, the Beersheba of this archipelago whose Dan is the Butt of Lewis.

It is no wonder if tourists do not often get so far, when till our own day the law had to make a long arm to reach the Hebrides, and the Protestant Reformation only begins to set foot on some of those remote strongholds of old ways and thoughts. Nine tourists out of ten, indeed, would find little to repay them for the tossing of the Minch. The archæologist may wander his difficult way among monuments of the past, standing stones, "doons," "tullocks," "Picts' houses," crosses, and shrines whose site is often marked only by a gathering of lonely graves, for even of the chapels and hermitages recorded in print but a small proportion can now be traced in the Western Islands. The rich stranger encloses these poor islands for his deer, narrowing and debasing the hard life of the people. Here and there snug inns invite anglers to sport such as Izaak Walton never dreamt of. Some parts, as Harris, show oases of real Highland scenery. But more often the Outer Hebrides present a bleak and monotonous aspect of rock, water, sand, and bog, where "the sea is all islands, and the land is all lakes." Their common features on half the days of the week are thus described by Robert Buchanan, who was no bookworm to be afraid of a wet jacket. "A dreary sky, a dreary fall of rain. Long low flats covered with their own damp breath, through which the miserable cattle loomed like shadows. Everywhere lakes and

The Outer Hebrides

pools, as thickly sown among the land as islands amid the Pacific waters. Huts wretched and chilly, scarcely distinguishable from the rock-strewn marshes surrounding them. To the east the Minch rolling dismal waters towards the far-off heads of Skye ; to the west the ocean, foaming at the lips and stretching barren and desolate into the rain-charged clouds."

The Long Island has cheerfuller prospects in its blinks of sunshine, and moments of loveliness caught by William Black, who is its Turner in words, while he seems to have a little distorted the human figures he sets against such effective backgrounds. One who has his eye for the scenery of sea and sky will not call these shores dismal. Another Scottish novelist tells us of the barest southern heath :

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn.

But on windy Hebrides there is hardly a tree to shiver, where docken, broom, or thistle may be the best substitute for a switch, and every drifting log or plank of shipwreck washed up from the Atlantic is treasured to make the rafters of a human nest. A woman brought to the mainland had no conception for trees but giant cabbages ; and when a basket of tomatoes came on shore an old Highlander was excited to see "apples" for once in his life. The wild carrot is the finest fruit that grows here naturally among the scent of the heather. Spring coming so "slowly up this way,"

The Highlands and Islands

some writers have said in their haste that flowers are rare in the Hebrides ; but more patient observers like Miss Gordon Cumming and Miss Goodrich Freer give a long list of humble blooms spangling the ground in their season, among them the sort of convolvulus found only on Eriskay, said to have been planted by Charles Edward, who on that rocky islet made his first landing, lodged in a house that stood till the other day. The damp hollows nurse luxuriant ferns ; the rushy lochans show often dappled with water-lilies and fringed with gay weeds. The Western Isles are better off for curling-ponds than for ice. The winter climate is chilly and damp rather than cold ; and the rainfall of course varies with the height of the islands, the flat marshy moors being spared by overcast skies that burst more freely on mountainous shores.

The cliffs and the waters—salt, fresh, and brackish—are haunts of innumerable wild-fowl and sea-birds. The cheery solo of lark or lapwing may be drowned by noisy concerts in which MacCulloch could distinguish “the short shrill treble of the Puffins and Auks, the melodious and varied notes of the different Gulls, the tenors of the Divers and Guillemots, and the croaking basses of the Cormorants.” On the west coast a frequent feature is dunes of white sand piled up by the Atlantic waves, pleasing to the eye but destructive as those of the Gascon Landes, for if not anchored down by bent grass or other hardy vegetation they are apt to drift over the interior, devastating whole districts like the Culbin sand fringe of fertile Moray, said to

The Outer Hebrides

have been let loose through the poor people stripping off such weak fetters for fuel.

Passionately as the islanders love their homes, they owe little to a thankless soil. The bulk of them are half croft-farmers, half fishers, the petty agricultural labours falling chiefly to the women's share, while the men alternate between spells of nautical adventure and lazy weather-watching. The wives and daughters have the worst of it, who in their hard daily tasks soon grow haggard, their bright eyes bleared by the smoke of the beehive huts in which they literally gather round the fire, amid furniture and utensils that often would not seem fit for a gipsy camp. In these hovels, hardly to be distinguished from the peat-stacks that shelter them, may still be found the crooked spade, the quern mill, the cruise lamp, and other time-honoured implements ; and in some parts rough home-made pottery is but slowly displaced. The condition of such dwellings is deplorable from a sanitarian's point of view. In spite of the fresh air in which alone they are rich, whole families are often swept away by consumption. Their food is mainly potatoes and oatmeal, fish and unfermented bread, with milk and eggs as luxuries. Meat they know only in the windfall of "braxy," unless a sheep be killed for a rare treat at Christmas or New Year. What did they do before potatoes were planted in the islands, much against the people's will ; and what do they do in seasons when both the potatoes and the fishing fail them, as happens now and then ? No wonder that they are pitied or abused as

The Highlands and Islands

indolent, languid, listless, shiftless, downcast. In other climes, when well fed, they may be found working hard enough and speaking their minds only too hotly ; but the lotus-eating of these mild-eyed, melancholy islanders does not put much heart into them. Peat is their only fuel, dug from the shallow mines that chequer their moors ; and even for that they may have to reckon closely with the landlord.

In Tiree—which indeed does not belong to the Outer Hebrides, lying close to Johnson's Coll—peat fails as well as wood, so coal has to be expensively imported ; but there, as compensation, the flat ground is less poor, and the people can take livelier joy in their toil. This island makes a contrast with South Uist, described as the most miserable of all by Miss Goodrich Freer, the latest and not the least sympathetic explorer of the Isles, who on Tiree found hopefuller colouring of life on a soil lying so low that it has been threatened with inundation by the waves as well as by the sand :—

The very existence of the island of South Uist is itself a tragedy which shames our civilisation. Nowhere in our proud Empire is there a spot more desolate, grim, hopelessly poverty-stricken. It is a wilderness of rocks and of standing water, on which, in the summer, golden lichen and spreading water-lilies mock the ghastly secrets of starvation and disease that they conceal. The water is constantly utterly unfit for drinking purposes. There is not a tree on the island, and one wonders how the miserable cattle and sheep contrive to live on the scant grey herbage. The land of the poor is not enclosed ; and to preserve the tiny crops from the hungry wandering



THE STANDING STONES OF CALLEARNISH, ISLAND OF LEWIS.

The Outer Hebrides

cows and horses they have to be continually watched, and as half an acre of bere may be distributed over five acres of bog and rock, the waste of human labour is considerable.

This writer goes on to give a deplorable account of filthy hovels serving the islanders as homes. But Mr. P. W. Tulloch, a recent visitor, protests against her description as exaggerated in its gloom, declaring that the present proprietor of South Uist and the adjacent Benbecula has built substantial houses, and that in other respects the crofters here are better off than their neighbours on the mainland.

At all events Miss Goodrich Freer's account fits only too well many spots of the Hebrides; and her sympathy with the islanders does not hinder her from hinting how far their semi-starvation is due to the obstinacy with which they cling to these barren shores, and their pig-headed resistance to progress. Lord Leverhulme, who last bought Lewis, and, like his predecessor, sank a small fortune in its bogs, was so baffled by the failure of his efforts to stir up the people to steady industry that he rewarded their ingratitude by offering them his unremunerative property as a free gift, an offer regarded by many of them in a *Timeo Danaos* spirit. But their would-be benefactor insisted on giving his castle at Stornoway to serve the town as Museum, Library, Municipal Offices, and residence for the Provost, whom he has endowed with £500 a year, providing that any further income from this abandoned demesne shall be spent on such objects as educational and medical services. On the Harris

The Highlands and Islands

bay of Obbe also, he has founded a fishing port named Leverburgh in hope to see it grow into a Highland Yarmouth. Such are the Saxon oppressors of our time !

The seaweeds, that here make submarine gardens reminding Miss Gordon Cumming of her wanderings among islands of coral and palm, count not a little among the harvests of the Hebrides. Several kinds eke out the people's food, and are freely given as fodder or medicine to starveling cattle, which have to be fed up on richer pastures before coming into Lowland markets. This crop of the sea goes to manure the thin soil, for which purpose also are used fish bones, and the smoke-soaked thatch of the houses ; and even the drifting sands in the long run, like far-blighting lava, may help to fresh fertility through the lime of powdered shells. Seaweed is the abundant raw material of an industry that for a time brought money and population to the West Highlands, the manufacture of kelp, chief supply of soda till Le Blanc's chemical process showed how it could be made out of salt ; then Free Trade opened our markets to a ruinous competition of barilla and other foreign supplies, so that in the first generation of last century the price of kelp had fallen from £22 to £2 a ton. Again its value was enhanced through the making of iodine used in aniline dyes ; but again chemistry and foreign competition conspired to beat down the Highland product, in spite of the gallant struggle of a Sassenach, Mr. E. C. Stanford, who for a generation laboured to show what

The Outer Hebrides

various benefits might be won from the "flowers of the sea." On Tiree and elsewhere another attempt is being made to revive this once thriving industry, too often represented by deserted kelp kilns along the shore, which future antiquaries may associate with the worship of a pagan deity whose mysterious symbols were *£ s. d.* I leave to such puzzled scholars the excursus on the Fiscal Question suggested at this point.

Donald does not take kindly to handicrafts. The only manufacture of the Hebrides now is the so-called Harris tweedings and stockings, made all over these islands, both for home use and for a sale much fostered of late by aristocratic patronage. The genuine article is imitated by machine-woven cloth of inferior texture ; and aniline dyes too much come into use in place of those cunningly extracted from roots, bark, heather, and seaweed. But in humble homes wool is still spun, woven, and dressed with songs and ceremonies handed down through many generations. Miss Goodrich Freer gives a pretty picture of a fulling "bee," where some ten women handle the web to the accelerated rhythm of the same choruses as an older traveller heard rising in excitement "till you would imagine a troop of female demoniacs to have been assembled," a scene that again has suggested the Fates weaving their strands of human destiny. The house is crammed with spectators ; and in the reek of peat, paraffin, and tobacco smoke the cloth takes on fresh odours to overcome the original perfume of fish oil, tallow, and

The Highlands and Islands

other dressings. But the London doctors who would frighten us with the bogey of microbes from these distant homes might be glad to inoculate their patients with the bloom of some ill-fed Highland lasses. The composition of wedding cake, it is said, should not be examined into too curiously ; and perhaps we can wear the waterproof tweed of the Isles more at ease for not having been present at its preparation.

The trade of the islanders is fishing, to which most of them are bound from boyhood, many wandering into far seas like their Viking forefathers ; and the girls, too, make long excursions to serve as fish gutters and curers for the season in eastern ports, even as far as Norfolk Yarmouth. Ling, cod, and lobsters yield a valuable harvest ; mussels and cockles are sent to metropolitan markets as relishes, on which the island folk will sometimes be reduced to live. Prince Charlie's first meal on Scottish ground was off such vulgar shell-fish. He was to fare worse before all was done ; and perhaps he might agree with one of his chroniclers—"Give me nettles and shell-fish in the North before fried fish (and too little of that) in the New Cut."

The chief game of their seas is, of course, the herring, which appear off the Hebridean coasts early in the season ; and there may be an aftermath in autumn, the more enterprising fishers in summer following the shoals round to the east coast. I have played the amateur herring-fisher on the warmer west side ; then I no longer wondered why these men armour themselves in such thick clothing that once overboard

The Outer Hebrides

they would have little chance of escaping Davy Jones, even had they learned to swim. That, I fancy, is an art not much cultivated in the Hebrides. Once a crony of mine and I got ourselves rowed off an island shore for a dive into deep water ; and over forty years I remember how the boatman's boy stared at our throwing off jackets and kilts, and the excited cry with which he jumped up, exclaiming in Gaelic, "They will be drowned !" To youngsters a night in a fishing-boat makes a pleasing taste of adventure, if the waves leave them appetite for coffee sweetened by treacle, and mackerel caught and cooked off-hand to be eaten with the hard biscuits that serve also for plates ; but the close air of the "den" may be a trying experience for unseasoned landlubbers. Then it is a fine sight in the chill dawn, when the phosphorescent glow of floats and cordage pales before the sheen of the fish hauled up in wave after wave of silver ; and one can catch the melancholy cheep of herrings as they flop out of the meshes of the net to swell a glittering, wriggling pile among which the men move like mermaids, their legs and arms encrusted with a gleam of scales. MacCulloch noted the phosphorescence of summer nights in these seas, offering splendid phenomena to eyes more often keen for their profits than their wonders :—

A stream of fire ran off on each side from the bows, and the ripple of the wake was spangled with the glow-worms of the deep. Every oar dropped diamonds, every fishing line was a line of light, the iron cable went down a torrent of flame, and the plunge of the anchor resembled an explosion of lightning.

The Highlands and Islands

When it blew a gale the appearance was sometimes terrific, and the whole atmosphere was illuminated, as if the moon had been at the full. In calms, nothing could exceed the loveliness of the night, thus enlightened by thousands of lamps, which, as they sailed slowly by, twinkled and were again extinguished at intervals, on the glassy and silent surface of the water.

Miss Goodrich Freer gives a picturesque scene of Roman Catholic islanders gathering at their little chapel to consecrate the going forth from which some of them may never return. Protestant fishermen will be not less earnest in their prayers ; but their services want the sense of intimate relation between heaven and earth that adorns a more childlike faith. Religion is with them too apt to take the form of bitter bigotry on the score of the Sabbatarian observance which they have turned into a sacrament, though on some coasts of Scotland ministers have still to wink at the time-honoured notion that Sunday is a lucky day for setting sail. Miss Gordon Cumming tells the story of an angry gathering of West Highlanders at Strome Ferry to hinder east coast fishermen from despatching a glut of herring by special Sunday train, when a couple of hundred policemen had to be brought from all parts of Scotland to protect the Sabbath-breaking railway against the Sabbath-breaking rioters. But if she mean to point a moral of Highland orthodoxy, I can remember a similar display of violence at an east coast harbour about the same time. A profane boat having broken the Sabbath by salting her Saturday catch within sacred hours, she was assaulted and wrecked at the quay in the

The Outer Hebrides

light of day, before the eyes of half the town. The ringleaders being brought to trial, the authorities were in some quandary as to what might follow their punishment ; but this anxiety proved quite superfluous, for on the clearest evidence, the facts being of public fame and the criminals as notable as the provost and bailies, a pious or prudent jury brought in a verdict of not guilty.

Early summer is the busy time of the Long Island, when Stornoway, Loch Boisdale, the Castle Bay of Barra, and other havens make rendezvous for hundreds of boats of various rigs, and the population is increased by dealers from foreign shores, with many thousands of fish curers and gutters, who, encamped in huts and bothies, are the followers of this fleet, attended also by mobs of greedy sea-gulls, where the waters will for once be smoothed by a scum of oily fish refuse. The shoals of herring are preyed on by hateful dog-fish and other shark-like creatures ; also by whales, which sometimes fall a fat prize to the fishermen. Indeed, there has lately been an attempt to carry on a regular whale fishery from Harris, causing a stench vigorously assailed as a nuisance ; and at a former time it appears that whales bulked largely in Long Island fare.

The cream of the herring fishing goes to trawlers and other well-found craft from richer shores of our islands. The fish-curing business, too, like everything that needs capital, is much in the hands of strangers, the export being largely to the Baltic. The Hebridean boatmen live from hand to mouth, setting draughts of luck

The Highlands and Islands

against blank days and weeks for which their competitors are better provided. The worst of it is, if all observers may be trusted, that being brought into touch with these rivals has a demoralising effect on the Celt, even as the trousers or houses of civilisation are apt to spread dirt and disease among African savages. The native Highland virtues seem to flourish best in spots secluded from contact with the prosperous Sassenach, whose wholesale commercialism sets a copy for retail cheater, when the islander who would share his last crust with a neighbour learns to look on gain won, *quocumque modo*, from the masterful intruder as nought but "retribution due."

Smaller satellites left out of account, the southernmost of the Outer Isles is Barra, whose seven miles' length of rocky shore opens into the harbour of Castle Bay. Here, covering an islet, stand the sturdy ruins of Kisimul Castle, pronounced by Miss Gordon Cumming the most picturesque thing in the Hebrides, that recalls Chillon by the way it rises out of the water against a hilly background. This was an old fastness of the M'Neills, supplanted by other lords who have never been able to wean the people from their clannishness, nor from their Roman Catholic faith, though they have long ceased to play the pirate and the wrecker. The spoil of wrecking, here once as welcome as in the Orkneys, was lost when the Hebrides came to be studded with lighthouses, like that on Barra Head, which is a separate islet, *alias* Bernera, and that upon the perilous reef of Skerryvore towards Tiree, the

The Outer Hebrides

masterpiece of Alan Stevenson, uncle to a writer whose name would shine far out into the world.

The larger South Uist shares also the poverty and the faith of Barra, its most prosperous spot being the fishing station of Loch Boisdale in the south-east corner. The east coast is cut by other deep inlets, over which Ben More and Hekla rise to a height of about 2000 feet, names making monuments of the rival races of Gael and Norseman. Among these wild Highlands, the early home of Flora Macdonald, Prince Charlie found one of his cave refuges, still hard to seek out ; and Miss Goodrich Freer reports a lonely loch in Glen Uisnish as rivalling the now famous Coruisk of Skye.

A link between North and South Uist, accessible from either at low water, is the island of Benbecula, "Hill of the Ford," divided between Protestants and Catholics. North Uist is Protestant, and travellers who lean to the picturesque view of religion have to admit that it looks rather more prosperous than its Catholic neighbour. The chief place here is Loch Maddy, a commodious harbour on which stands the hamlet capital of the island. Its chief interest seems the extraordinary reticulation of the inlets, Loch Maddy, a sheet of ten square miles, being said to have a coastline of 300 miles ; but its bens are only benjies, no higher than some hills in sight of Plymouth Sound. Its shores are much broken into peninsulas and satellite islets that might be let out to would-be Robinson Crusoes.

Across the strait of Harris is reached the Long

The Highlands and Islands

Island proper, commonly conceived as two islands, Harris and Lewis—the Lews in the vernacular—but the smaller southern projection is joined on to the main mass by a narrow *Tarbert*. This isthmus does not quite mark the bounds of Harris, which like the other islands belongs to Inverness-shire, while Lewis makes part of Ross. Nature has set another distinction, the south part being boldly and barely mountainous, a forest of granite and gneiss peaks, amid which shy deer enjoy the beauties of this Hebridean Switzerland, while the north rather shows brown flats of moorland, rimmed with cliffs, streaked with green, dotted with patches of struggling culture and pitted with lochans. All round, the shores are deeply cut by fiords, the largest being Loch Seaforth on the east side, and on the west island-choked Loch Roag, home of that “Princess of Thule” whose begetter takes a more highly coloured view of this scenery than is revealed to most observers. Mr. John Sinclair is another writer who has an artistic good word to say for the Lewis :—

The shores are everywhere rugged and rocky, save where, at wide intervals, they are interrupted by broad bays or narrow sea lochs, which terminate in green glens among the hills. The middle and northern districts are for the most part great stretches of flat or undulating moorland, dotted all over with hundreds of little lochs and tarns, into which no burns tumble and out of which no rivers flow. Yet how pretty these flat saucers of rain-water are—scores and scores of them glistening in the sunshine like silver ornaments laid out to view upon a russet ground. In the south and south-west the mountains are thickly studded and lofty, but long twisting arms of the

The Outer Hebrides

sea boldly creep in between them and almost meet from opposite sides of the island. Many of these inlets taper away to narrow points, which are hidden in deep valleys eight or ten miles from the open sea. So many are the fresh-water lochs and the insinuating arms of the ocean, that in bird's-eye view the whole island must resemble a diamond window with its countless raindrops darting one into another at the beginning of a shower. The hill tops are singularly wild and bare, scarcely a tinge of green relieving the yellow masses of rock and stone, but in the valleys there are many choice spots of sweet verdure and beauty.

On the neck of an eastern peninsula of Lewis stands Stornoway, which to the islanders appears a capital of dazzling luxury, and even strangers are struck by the gardens nursed into exotic luxuriance about its castle, home of a family who have sown a fortune in improving their poor lordship without reaping much gratitude in return. In Harris the most notable spot is Rodill at the south end, where the restoration of a cruciform church best represents the many monastic and eremitic shrines once dotting these isles "set far among the melancholy main." Still less can one enumerate the traces of more hoary antiquity, over which Mr. David MacRitchie exclaims, "It is enough to break the heart of an antiquary to wander about the Hebrides and see again and again the site of what once were doons now represented by a tumbled heap of stones, and sometimes not even by that."

On the west side of Lewis, near the fishing inn of Garrynahine, stands the most celebrated and the least destructible of ancient monuments, the Stones of

The Highlands and Islands

Callernish, which used to pass for a Druid temple, when there was as much reason for entitling them a Druid theatre, town-hall, or house of parliament, if not the tomb of some once towering hero long gone to Valhalla. The figure of a cross has been traced in their position, on which account they have been credited to St. Columba, the truth being that their origin is as mysterious as that of Stonehenge. Not far off are the ruins of the Doon of Carloway, one of the best specimens of this kind of fortification, often dubbed a Pictish tower. Then, towards the Butt of Lewis, in the wildest and most primitive part of the island, the "Troosel Stone," tallest monolith in Scotland, may from its name be a record of obscene rites, though it also is claimed as an heroic tombstone.

At this north end the features of the people, Gaelic-speaking as they are, most clearly betray the Norse settlement, indicated throughout by many of the place-names, as the recurring Fladdas, Berneras, and Scalpas. The Macleods, once predominant here, till the Mackenzies overlaid them in the Lewis as the Macdonalds in Skye, are believed to have been of this foreign origin. At the end of the sixteenth century an attempt was made to introduce another stock, when a number of Lowland gentlemen, chiefly from Fife, formed themselves into a Chartered Company of the period, to which the savage Lewis was granted by James VI. as area for such a "plantation" as Elizabeth charily patronised in Virginia. These "Adventurers" or "Undertakers" enlisted a little army, armed with

The Outer Hebrides

tools as well as weapons ; but three attempts at settlement disastrously failed, and the work of civilisation was left to be carried out by nearer neighbours.

Lewis and Harris have in our day been conquered by the Free Church, that puts its ban on the old customs and revels and would weed out the old superstitions, though still kirk-goers will fear to jest of the water-horse mounted by mortal men to their swift destruction, or the water-bull that haunts lonely lochs to snap at bathing boys, or swallow up sheep whose owner brought back from market a head not clear for counting. Such uncanny beasts can be shot only with silver : perhaps the origin of "Bang went sixpence !" Of late years the bitterness of controversy between the United Free and the "Wee Free" divisions of their Church has set congregations by the ears, while the decision of the Lords should breathe a new sentiment of imperial loyalty into the triumphant party, hitherto disposed to Home Rule heresies. Out of Stornoway, there is not a licensed public-house on the Lewis, a fact that makes for peace. Crime is hardly known here, but for a land league agitation that has prompted incendiary fires and brutal mutilation of cattle as well as refusal to pay rent, along with a general sore-headedness that was poulticed for a time by the Crofters' Commission, but may show signs of breaking out again when freshly recurring arrears come to be demanded.

Over the island can be traced broken fold-dykes and patches of rig and furrow lost among the heather,

The Highlands and Islands

which are taken as signs of a once more extended cultivation of this poor soil, reported by Martin, two centuries ago, as fruitful in corn up till a then recent period. However this may be, a century ago the Rev. James Hall declared that the "scallags" (labouring class) of the Hebrides were practically slaves, treated by their masters worse than negroes. But at that time they seem to have been more patient, not yet having found out how they were ill off. They can hardly expect to be over well off, when, in spite of emigration, a century has raised the population of Lewis from about 9000 to 29,000, an increase unparalleled in the Highlands. Yet what with one help and another, the people of this congested area seem not so poverty-stricken as on islands that have been more depleted of their natural increase.

Forty miles above the Butt of Lewis, on an ocean-washed rock one of the old hermit saints built his chapel. Then far out to the west, beyond the uninhabited Flannan Isles or Seven Hunters, lies—

Utmost Kilda's shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds.

This remote isle, its celebrity depending on its insignificance, is about three miles by two, a jagged mass of steep crags, which on one side are said to present the loftiest sea-face in Britain, about 1300 feet. The climate is mild and damp, muggy and windy, the clouds of the Atlantic being caught on those tall crags, less familiar with snow than with a

The Outer Hebrides

white coating of countless sea-fowl, which, with their eggs, make the chief fare of the inhabitants. Before the days of steam St. Kilda was cut off from intercourse with the world, except through supply expeditions sent from Skye by its Macleod landlords, or through chance visits, when the rare stranger would be warmly welcomed and attended by all the male population, as MacCulloch was, like "a Jack Pudding at a country fair followed by a mob of boys." Nature, it is said, serves them as a leisurely postman, when a letter sealed in a bottle will drift on to the mainland in time ; but the winds and waves can seldom bring an answer by return. The story goes that the islanders heard nothing of Prince Charlie's enterprise till it was all over, nor of Waterloo and the Hundred Days, and that William the Fourth was prayed for three years after his death, as is by no means according to Presbyterian orthodoxy. Even now, long dark winter months may pass without news whether Scotland stands as it did. But Miss Goodrich Freer laments that only too many tourists reach this remote isle in summer to corrupt a primitive community which, with scant aid from books and teachers, has evolved a high standard of morals and mutual helpfulness, if not of that virtue that proverbially comes next to godliness.

Two centuries ago St. Kilda even came near to adopt a religion of its own through the doctrine of an illiterate youth named Roderick, who, professing to have received a revelation from John the Baptist, imposed fasts, penances, sacrifices, and forms of prayer

The Highlands and Islands

upon the superstitious islanders, mixing "the laudable customs of the Church with his own diabolical inventions." For years he played his prophetic part, till it became manifest that St. John's oracle had a very human side, when Cæsar, in the person of Macleod's steward, persecuted him into silence ; and an orthodox minister came over to exorcise his heresies. In those days the people seem to have been little better than pagans with a varnish of Catholicism ; but now they have a Free Church, whose pastor was once the only inhabitant that could speak English, as all the school children can do now.

The population numbers some few score, Gaelic speaking, though they make no show of tartan, and, except in English pictures, kilts were never adapted to their amphibious and crag-scrambling industries. The oft-told tale of a severe cold breaking out among them on the arrival of a stranger seems to relate to the sharp wind which brought a ship, with its invisible freight of alien microbes, to their slippery landing-place. Nature has placed them in quarantine from many ills flesh is heir to on the mainland, yet once an infection of smallpox had nearly exterminated the islanders ; and if former statistics be accurate, their numbers have decreased within a century or so. There is a very high death-rate among newly born children ; and the old people are apt to be crippled by rheumatism ; but in middle life they thrive on what should be a dyspeptic diet of oily sea-birds ; and consumption is unknown in this natural Nordrach sanitorium. They

The Outer Hebrides

have fields of oats and potatoes, also cattle and sheep, from which they can clothe themselves. Their landlord has provided them with a street of good stone houses, far superior to the ordinary crofter's home ; and their old haystack hovels are chiefly used as stores or outhouses ; but their zinc roofs cover true Highland untidiness. "Milk dishes, ropes, tarry nets, wool, cooking pots, and fishing tackle are strewn haphazard over the broken earthen floors ; from the smoke-blackened rafters hang a winter store of dried sea-fowl, fish, and bladders containing oil for use in the long winter nights." And everywhere are in evidence the feathers that make St. Kilda's best merchandise, as birds are its chief stock, from the great northern diver to the so-called St. Kilda wren, lately protected by law against extermination. "The air is full of feathered animals, the sea is covered with them, the houses are ornamented by them, the ground is speckled by them like a flowery meadow in May. The town is paved with feathers ; the very dunghills are made of feathers ; the ploughed land seems as if it had been sown with feathers ; and the inhabitants look as if they had been all tarred and feathered, for their hair is full of feathers, and their clothes are covered with feathers."

A romance of St. Kilda is the mysterious story of Lady Grange, imprisoned here under circumstances which have not been made very clear. She was the daughter of a gentleman who shot the Lord President for deciding a suit against him, so that she might seem to have hereditarily forfeited a right to the protection

The Highlands and Islands

of law. Married to Erskine of Grange, a brother of the Jacobite Earl of Mar, after a quarter of a century's wedded life she became such a peril or a nuisance to her husband that, himself a judge of the Court of Session, he planned or abetted a scheme for keeping her in life-long confinement as a madwoman. One story is that she knew of traitorous dealings on his part with the king over the water. Kidnapped from her lodging in Edinburgh by a party of Highlanders, she was violently dragged across Scotland on byways and highways, apparently without any interference at her successive places of detention, the journeys usually being made by night, and the poor lady gagged when she would have cried out for rescue. From Glen-garry's country she was shipped into the western islands, and in time to St. Kilda, where she spent some eight years, in vain trying to communicate with her friends, if she had any friends disposed to serve her, as her own sons and her kinsfolk appear not to have stirred in the matter. She is said to have been taken over to Sutherland, then to Skye, where she died after years of illegal durance. Her story seems almost incredible ; but even in the nineteenth century an ex-army officer, no doubt not very strong in his wits, was kept imprisoned upon one of the Shetlands for twenty years or so, till quite romantically rescued by the agency of a female missionary.

CHAPTER IX

THULE

WILLIAM BLACK went about to dub the Hebrides our Thule ; but that title better belongs to the islands of fellow-countrymen—

Who dwell beyond the Pentland's roar
And watch dim skerries white with drowning seas ;
And hear Æolian moanings of the breeze
Wandering ever about a surf-strewn shore ;
Beneath broad skies with billowy mist-wreaths hoar ;
Through winter days that gloom but never freeze
Nor chill the Northern heart's devotion.

The Orkney and Shetland Isles, whoever were their original inhabitants, became restocked from the kingdom that figures in legendary history as “Lochlin,” and still plainly keep much of the Scandinavian character, on other coasts of Britain appearing only in patches and strains, or, as in the Southern Hebrides, overlaid by Celtic features. These “Nordereys” had early been known to Gothic pirates, crushing the nascent Christianity believed to have been planted by Cormac and other disciples of St. Columba, ghostly fathers whose memory seems to survive in the *Papas* of the archipelago.

The Highlands and Islands

The Norwegian kingdom, converted in turn, established its power more or less firmly all over the Hebrides, with occasional assaults on Ireland and Scotland ; and for three centuries the Orkneys made a Jarldom dependent on Norway. The Icelandic sagas throw a weird light on their confused history of feuds, treacheries, fire and sword, bouts of drinking and devotion, from which, as the kingdom of Scotland took shape, begins to emerge a contention between relationships of kindred and of vicinity. The quasi-independent Jarls of Orkney fitfully recognised a suzerain in Scotland as well as in Norway. At one time we find this Norwegian Nizam seated across the Pentland as Thane of Caithness ; then again a Scottish earl is imposed on the Orkneys. The position of Shetland is more obscure at this period, but till well on in the middle ages all the Hebrides belonged to the archiepiscopal diocese of Trondhjem.

When the last Norwegian invasion of Scotland had been defeated on the Clyde, Haco retired to Kirkwall, there dying in 1263. The winds warred against that armada, whose failure was not so much a decisive blow as one strain in a gradual loosening of Norse authority over the isles. Soon afterwards, Haco's son formally resigned to Alexander III. all dominion of the Hebrides, except in the Orkneys and Shetlands, which were specially reserved to the Norwegian crown, by and by absorbed in that of Denmark. But two centuries later, when certain differences between these thrones came to be adjusted by the marriage of James III. to Margaret of Denmark, her father pledged the islands to Scotland



Thule

for the bulk of her stipulated dowry, 60,000 florins, that have never been paid ; and so we hold this part of our kingdom on a pawnbroker's title, as to which international lawyers might cover acres of foolscap, if Denmark were disposed to clear off the mortgage.

Even earlier, Sinclairs and other lords from the mainland had pushed on to the Orkneys, which afterwards became so oppressively exploited by esurient Scots that theirs was no beloved name here ; and the islanders, even now that old resentments are forgot, decline to look on themselves as Scotsmen. The mass of the population are of Norse stock, whose language died out here as slowly as Cornish at the other end of the kingdom ; and still it colours the local dialect, that kept a quaint Quakerism of *thee* and *thou*, with a continental slurring of the *h* in such words. The islands are reckoned as a Scottish county, but their *particularismus* considers itself rather as a boat towed in the wake of Great Britain ; and they speak of going to Scotland as Cornishmen of crossing the Tamar into England. Another correspondence with Cornwall is in the prevalence here of dissenting forms of Evangelical doctrine. Then, like the Cornish moors and cliffs, those of Thule are dotted with grey monuments of forgotten faith and bloodshed, long washed out of memory.

Except by isolated incidents, the islands enter little into the history of Scotland, since the days when it was alternately a refuge and a raiding ground for their Viking chiefs. Kirkcaldy of Grange was shipwrecked here in pursuit of Bothwell. Montrose pressed some

The Highlands and Islands

of the islanders into his service, else they took slight interest in the wars of Whig and Tory. More than one stirring naval engagement came off at this northern end of the kingdom, long exposed to raids from French and Dutch cruisers, against which, indeed, most of the islands were well defended by their perilous reefs and currents. Their latest appearance in history was a hoax that deceived newspaper readers of 1866 into believing the account of a Fenian raid on Unst, with such details as a forced ransom, the taking of hostages, the minister hanged by his own bell-rope, all set forth so seriously that a man-of-war is said to have got as far as Aberdeen on its way to the rescue.

The two groups number some eight score islands and islets, not half of them inhabited. Lying in the Gulf Stream, they have a wet and windy climate, variable rather than severe, often cool in summer, raw and rheumatic in winter, when a truly dark December affords little chance for skating or curling. That many-weathered March of our islands usually brings the sharpest cold to this end of them. The whole archipelago is so broken into *holms* and indented by *voes*, that on the largest islands one will never be more than a few miles from the sea; nor is it easy to take a mile's walk without coming on a reed-fringed, foam-edged basin of fresh water, over which salt spray blows into one's face across the rough cliff-bound flats that swell up into waves of moor, but seldom into imposing hills. Except in a few favoured spots, where thin clumps of stunted wood are nursed like gardens,

Thule

a telegraph post is the only kind of tree breaking the bleak horizon above heath and bog, with a lonely farmhouse, a huddlement of cottages, a patch of fields now and then to remind us that this is no wilderness. Seen under its too frequent shade of sullen sky or drizzling showers, such a landscape strikes the lover of lush nature as dismal, yet it has its bright moments, sometimes its halcyon seasons in the long days of the far northern summers, and at all times taking features of its own. "The scene, which on a sunless day seems hard and cold, with occasional gleams of sunlight, becomes a perfect kaleidoscope of varying colours." So writes Mr. J. R. Tudor in his excellent book on the islands, which also tells us of "vivid greens" in early summer, of glorious shows of red clover to relieve the prevalent dulness, and of a rich spangling of spring flowerets that here linger into June and July. The little purplish *Primula Scotica* has been called the queen of Orkney blooms, among them some rare in the North, and some that seem dying out in a hard struggle for existence. The writer who thinly disguised himself as "Shirley," thus sums up our Thule's finest features :—

For the artist there are vast spaces of sea and sky ; the shining sands ; the glories of the sunset ; and above and beyond all the pageantry of the storm. For each day a fresh drama is transacted upon the heavens. The morning hours are often brilliantly bright ; but ere mid-day the sun is suddenly obscured ; the storm-cloud rises out of the Atlantic ; sometimes the wind and rain lash the panes for hours ; sometimes

The Highlands and Islands

the cloud breaks upon the hills of Hoy, and passes away like a dream. The *dénouement* of the drama is always obscure ; you cannot predict what the end will be, and so the interest never flags. And among the land-locked bays and through the narrow channels there is excellent boating for those who can circumvent the tides. Unless, indeed, you know something of the obscure laws which govern the ebb and flow of the ocean in this network of islands, you are pretty sure to come to grief. For round many of them it runs like a mill-race. Between Hoy and Stennis, for instance, the ebb is simply a foaming and swirling torrent, against which sail and even steam are powerless. That vast body of water pouring into the Atlantic is as irresistible as a Canadian rapid. But if you study the tides, you can seek out secluded nooks, where the seals are basking on the tangle, and the wild duck are wheeling round the bay, and the blue rocks are darting out of the caves, and the grouse are crowing among the heather, and where for ten months out of the twelve the peace is absolute, and silence unbroken save by the shepherd's dog.

It has been remarked how the very superstitions of such a land run naturally to fishiness, as indeed all over the Hebrides uncouth leviathans haunt the fog banks, dragons lurk in the hollowed cliffs, sea-serpents in the voes as water-bulls in the lochans, and treacherously smiling mermaids, more to be shunned than all these monsters, delude men to their doom among slippery reefs. The mermaid legends may well have been suggested by half-human glimpses of seals. Our critical age is also disposed to relate them to occasional visits of Eskimo or Lapp adventurers, seen only to the waist in their skin canoes. Not so long ago there were people in the islands who boasted

Thule

descent from "Finn" strangers, very possibly kinsmen of an aboriginal pigmy race, Picts, "Pechts," or what not, that may here have left their memory in the "Trows" or "Trolls" of land mythology, and their name in the Pentland (*Pechtland*) Firth.

Fishing and fowling, as well as antiquarian puzzles, have long been attractions to these rocks and waters, that begin to be more visited for their own sake, now that our generation develops a taste in out-of-the-way aspects of nature. It was a lucky hit for the archipelago when in 1814 Walter Scott accompanied the Northern Lights Commissioners on their jovial tour of office, at Stromness picking up from a toothless Norna that story of the pirate Gow which he so well dressed up in the contents of his note-book. One admires his dexterity in conducting the plot so as to bring in the lions of a trip, his companions on which could have no doubt of the authorship. Gow was a real character, whose name, to be translated Smith, pairs with Paul Jones, another eighteenth-century corsair, of whom it is told that he was scared away from Lerwick by the red flannel petticoats of women marching to market, as the French invaders of Pembrokeshire were by red-cloaked Welshwomen, mistaken for an army of soldiers. It seems strange to remember how Scott's fellow-tourists were kept on the alert by the fear of American privateers.

From the Orkneys Byron also took an authentic hero for his *Island* in George Stewart, midshipman of the *Bounty*, "tempest-born in body and in mind,"

The Highlands and Islands

whose Otaheitean child was living here in the middle of last century. Then Orkney has poets of her own, such as John Malcolm, the soldier ; David Vedder, the sailor ; and Mr T. S. Omond, known as a writer on as in metre, from whom I have quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Professor Aytoun, whose lyre had such a range of strings, was connected with the islands as their Sheriff, while one of his Christian names hints at kindred with the Shetland Edmonstons distinguished in natural history. Clouston is the name of another "family-pen" here ; and that of Moodie, husband and wife, was transplanted to Canadian authorship. Rae the Arctic, and Baikie the African explorer set out from so far north. From Orkney came a whole galaxy of Traill writers. The three Laings, all notable in literature, were of an Orkney family. So was Washington Irving, who indeed narrowly escaped being born on Shapinshay, as our American cousins will be interested to know. J. R. Lowell was of Orkney blood by the spindle side ; he could remember his maternal grandmother as dressing in black on Independence Day and lamenting "His Majesty's unhappy differences with his colonists." By the way, in *Bonnie Scotland*, while explaining how, spite of such names as Munroe, Buchanan, Grant, Arthur, McKinley, no born Scotsman has yet been President of the United States, I forgot to mention that President Polk (*Pollock*) boasted lineal descent from John Knox. It may be added that President Roosevelt is certainly of Scottish stock on one side, even if his paternal line

Thule

be not connected with some John o' Groat or Dirk Hatteraick.

In Scott's day the islands were backward in cultivation, though what with fishing, wrecks, smuggling, and kelp-burning, the people seemed uncommonly well supplied with luxuries. Poverty may have originally prompted that strange superstition as to the danger of saving lives from the sea, which lingered in Cornwall, too, almost up to our own day. The islanders counted on what they could make out of "God-sends" such as helped to furnish Magnus Troil's house and the pack of Bryce Snailsfoot; and it was a serious loss to them when the beaconing of their stormy waters diminished the harvest of flotsam and jetsam. Scott tells how an Orcadian answered Mr. Stevenson remarking on the bad sails of his boat: "If it had been His will that you hadna built sae many light-houses hereabout, I would have had new sails last winter."

The ground was much divided among small proprietors, as it still is to a less degree, and small holdings are common, so that the islands were, quite needlessly as regards the Orkneys, some think, put under the Crofters Commission. The people of the southern group are more thriftily prosperous than in the Hebrides. They had their fit of standing out obstinately against "improvements"; then they suffered from the set-back of the kelp industry, here very profitable for a time, but its failure proved a blessing in disguise as turning their attention to agriculture;

The Highlands and Islands

and they seem too well off now to trouble about kelp, on which the landlords would still set them working at "orra" times. In the last half-century tenants and "peerie" lairds showed the sense to follow enterprising landlords like Balfour of Shapinshay, so that now many of the farms compare with those on the mainland. There is a flourishing export of cattle, much improved by the introduction of good stock. Along with their ponies and hairy sheep, almost as wild as goats, the islands had a breed of small cows, from whose milk was made their peculiar drink *bland*, resembling the koumiss of the Tartars. Some quarter of a century ago an effort was made to push this beverage in London, where, however, it seems not to have "caught on." Then living in Kensington lodgings, I patriotically ordered a case of it, which, as the weather was hot and the liquor "up," I put under my bed, taking this for the coolest spot at my command, but ignorant that it was over the kitchen fire. I had hardly got into bed when, one by one, the bottles began to explode, till the whole battery had fired itself away. Above me slept no less a fellow-lodger than General Gordon, not yet of Khartoum; and I wondered whether my bombardment might have brought China into his dreams.

The Shetlands, for their part, are grander, wilder, rougher, poorer, colder, wetter, less "improved," in general, more Norse and primitive. Their industry is rather at sea than on land. Mr. Tudor quotes an apt saying as to the difference between the people :



AN ORCADIAN FIREPLACE

Thule

"The Shetlander is a fisherman who has a farm ; the Orcadian a farmer who has a boat." Through the fisheries the Shetlanders were long in closer touch with Holland and Scandinavia than with Scotland, which for centuries has been spreading her tentacles over the adjacent Orkneys. A century ago Dutch and Danish coins were more familiar at Lerwick than the head of George III. ; and up to a later time, Norwegian weights and measures were used all over the islands. The Orkneys are, or were, well stocked with grouse and snipe ; sea-fowl are the game of the Shetlands, not that they lack in the southern group, among which the great auk was killed off three-quarters of a century ago. Straw-plaiting was once a resource of the Orkneys. They are rich in cattle, the Shetlands rather in sheep, where the chief home industry is the hosiery knitting that keeps women's fingers busy even when their backs are bowed under peat creels. The Shetlands, in short, bear much the same relation to the Orkneys as the Highlands to the Lowlands, though the old name *Hialtland* seems not so fitting as *Sea-land*, the former spelling of which is preserved in the Earl of Zetland's title. Till lately the Shetlands were less visited by strangers ; but now a tide of tourist-travel seems to be setting strongly to the northern isles, that offer such a change of air for southrons able to put up with somewhat scrimp accommodation, while hospitable goodwill as yet must take the place of hotel luxury.

The tourist's easiest goal is Kirkwall, capital of the Mainland, *alias* Pomona, central mass of the Orkneys.

The Highlands and Islands

The old grey town, cramped into narrow ways, stands at the head of its "Church Bay," about the towering Cathedral founded by Jarl Ronald in memory of his uncle, murdered St. Magnus. This is one of the few noble Scottish fanes that came almost unhurt through the Reformation, though mutilated by tempest and by neglect, and only in part still used as a church. It rivals Glasgow as the finest of northern Cathedrals, its special character being a height and narrowness that give imposing effect, and some of the architectural ornaments are of striking beauty, as the east rose-window and the carved doorways in which different colours of stone were well combined. By the will of a late eccentric Sheriff, a considerable sum becomes available for the restoration or decoration of this ancient fabric.

Beside the Cathedral stand the ruins of two palaces : the Bishop's, in which King Haco died, and the later Earl's, built by Patrick Stewart, tyrant of the Islands, as was his father before him, a left-handed son of James V., set up in life with this misused dominion. Patrick's oppressions were so scandalous that he came to execution, as did his son Robert Stewart, for rebellion, so, like the Dukedom of Orkney conferred by Mary on Bothwell, who never got the length of admission into Kirkwall, the Stewarts' Earldom passed away, belying its boastful motto, *Sic fuit, est, et erit*. These offshoots of royalty seem unlucky in their intromissions with Latin, for one of the charges against them was Earl Robert having described himself as "Filius Jacobi

Thule

Quinti *Rex* Scotorum," a slip in grammar that came to be judged treasonable, as indeed did Wolsey's good Latinity, "Ego et rex meus."

The royal castle has disappeared, its site commemorated by the name of an hotel ; but Kirkwall has still several quaint and venerable mansions, once inhabited by the island aristocracy, behind which are hidden gardens that in this climate seem more precious than palaces. In short, Kirkwall is quite a place to "delay the tourist," whose visit will probably not coincide with the New Year football Saturnalia, kept up here as on Shrove Tuesday in some English towns ; but he may come in for the dwindled delights of the Lammas Fair, described by Scott in all its glory.

The vicinity is full of antiquarian interest. From the hill above the town, as Dr John Kerr says, one can see "memorials of every form of religion that has ever existed in Scotland." A few miles off, towards the other side of the island, is a region strewn with prehistoric remains, like the moors of Karnac in Brittany. The most famous lion here is the Stones of Stennis, a circle of sacrifice, sepulture, or what not, second only to Stonehenge in our islands. On the opposite side of the deep double inlet of Stennis, half fresh and half salt water, stand or lie ruins of a similar circle, near which a modern Vandal has demolished the "Stone of Odin," where Minna Troil would have pledged her faith to Cleveland by clasping hands through the opening of a pierced obelisk, gentler rite than that carving a captive foe's back into "a red eagle," for which one

The Highlands and Islands

of these stones once made a scaffold. Not far off is the famous Maeshowe tumulus, whose mysterious runes have tried the ingenuity of many interpreters. Similar chambered mounds, "fairy howes" to the people, are found nearer Kirkwall, as in other islands, all over which may be encountered "grey, grim, and solitary standing stones, bearded with moss, which are kith and kin to the prehistoric obelisks of Stennis." A sight of a very different kind is Balfour Castle, on the island of Shapinshay, where a mansion imitating Abbotsford has been decked out in exotic greenery, that seeks to vie with the gardens of Lewis Castle.

At the north end of the island, Birsay is visited for the ruined "palace" of the Jarls, and for the fishing of its lochs. The only other town is Stromness on the west side, a snug little port, for which the sea is "a domestic institution," as Mr. Gorrie says. "It ripples familiarly up the short lanes between rows of houses, and the bows of vessels stretch across second-storey windows." A ship's cabin serves, or used to serve, as smoking-room in the garden of the hotel. The shop windows, besides sea stores, chiefly exhibit sweets and stockings, but such hints of innocent tastes may be overlaid in early summer, when thousands of herring-fishers come to make the place an unsavoury rendezvous, as it once was for whalers and Hudson Bay traders. Stromness should be noted in Scottish history for a law case in which this champion of open markets broke down the trade monopoly hitherto arrogated by royal burghs, like Kirkwall; and these competitors love



Thule

each other as Margate loves Ramsgate. Its museum contains an interesting collection of fossils, among them that primæval monster the *Asterolepis*, of which Hugh Miller made his celebrated discovery hereabouts.

Off Stromness lies Hoy, an island containing the cream of Orkney scenery. On the north-west side the cliffs are higher than any of our mainland, and beside them rises the Old Man of Hoy, now on his last leg, but he once had two to prop up "the grandest natural obelisk in the British Isles." The difficulty is to get a view of these giant rocks by leave of the rushing tideways and the squally winds. I have seen them only from their edge, yet might as well have been in Cheapside, when such a heavy drifting mist came on that I was glad to grope my way down, steering cautiously by half-obsured knolls, as shown on the Ordnance Map. The clearest sight I saw was the abashment of an English tourist, who suddenly emerged from the fog *sans culotte*, with fluttering shirt tails, wearing his most indispensable garment over his arm, perhaps from some mental confusion between Arcadian and Orcadian customs, or he had reckoned on meeting no one more modest than that Old Man of Hoy. Sights more safely visited are the Dwarfie Stone, the glen of Berriedale, the Kaim of Hoy, whose rock profile gratefully presents a silhouette of Sir Walter Scott, and the Enchanted Carbuncle seen by faithful eyes sparkling on the side of the Ward Hill. This is the highest point of the islands (1556 feet), from whose top, on a fine day, one has them spread out on the sea

The Highlands and Islands

like a toy map, and can count their lower Ward Hills that once gave alarms of the approach of a foe.

Even the short crossing to Hoy may turn out a little adventurous ; and the gentle tourist is not apt to make his way to less famous islands, their funnelled and tunnelled cliffs cut off from each other by such wild seas that this amphibious constituency has for its elections a fortnight's grace beyond the rest of Britain. Next to Hoy, Rousay is the most Highland of the Orkneys, and North Ronaldshay is said to be the most primitive, as South Ronaldshay the most fertile. Each sundered portion cherishes a parish patriotism, once breeding hot feuds, but now chiefly represented by nicknames interchanged between the islanders, the *Hawks* of Hoy, the *Crabs* of Harray, the *Sheep* of Shapinshay, the *Limpets* of Stronsay, the *Mares* of Rousay, and so forth, neighbourly pleasantries that in the Shetlands take more offensively personal forms, as the *Thieves* of Yell, and the "Honest Folk" of Unst, so named with a note of interrogation. Some quaint Norse family names abound here, such as Halcro, Harcus, Inkster, Bea, Cursiter, Isbister ; and, as one might expect, these are found so closely packed together that, on one island, a school-inspector mentions a roll of eighty children having among them only eight surnames. Scottish names are commoner in the Orkneys, my own for one, a branch of which "loured" so far north as Rapness in Westray, whence its thrivingest shoot came back to Perthshire, buying from his impoverished chief the family estate of that

Thule

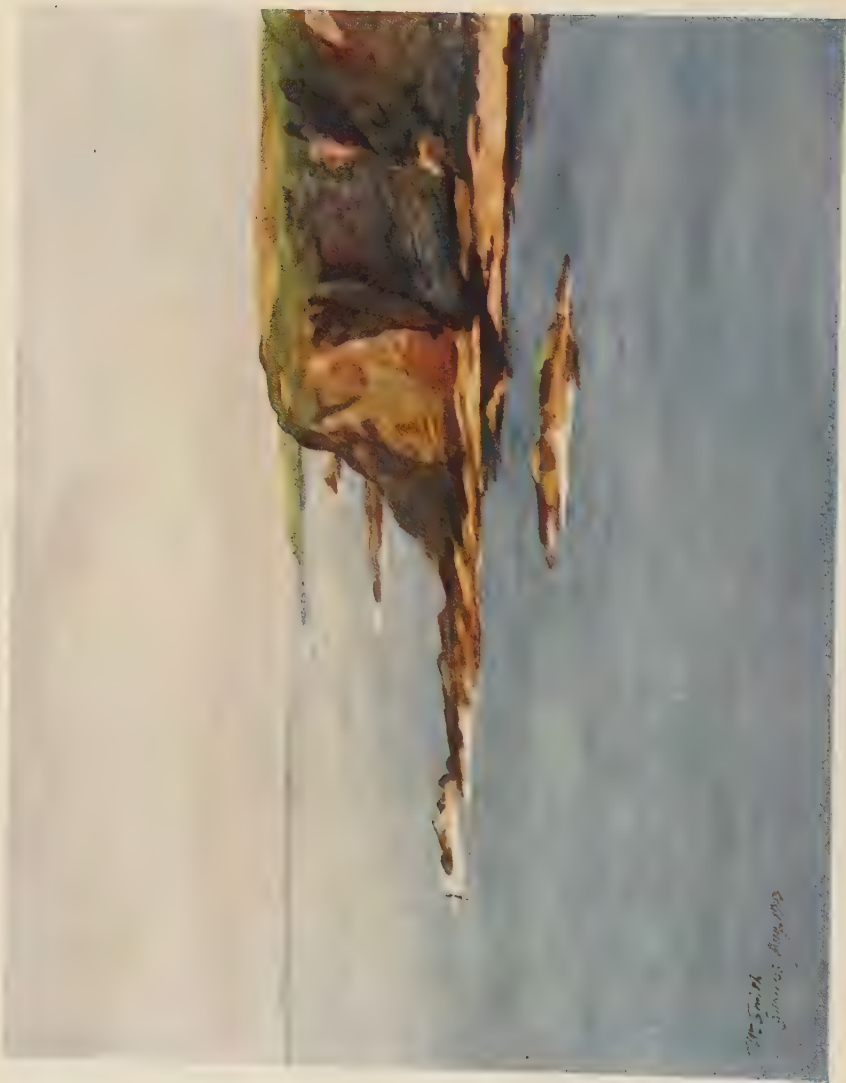
ilk with a fortune made apparently not in those wild seas, but as a public official. The Orkneys more than the Shetlands were overrun by Scottish lairds and their dependants who, like the English settlers in Ireland, fell much into the popular sentiment and grew to be more or less loyal sons of Thule.

As link between the Orkneys and the Shetlands, in the middle of Sumburgh Roost, where the Gulf Stream rushes almost as violently as through the Pentland Firth, stands the lonely little Fair Isle, a foul one for ships, which, like the Farøe Isles, gets its name not from beauty, but from the Norse *faar*, "sheep." A botanist tells us how its one meadow is almost dyed in the season by the blue flower of the "sheep's bit." This cliff-walled island was once visited chiefly in the way of shipwreck, and still strangers are rare birds here, warmly welcomed, unless they turn out to be revenue officers or such-like, the sight of whom used to set the people scurrying like rabbits to their burrows, while they opened their arms to preachers of any denomination. In Scott's time they had a pastoral visit only once a year, sometimes not so often, where several couples might be ready for marriage in a lump, and a dozen children for baptism, one of them old enough to make an unedifying comment on the ceremony, as the novelist records. The great event in Fair Isle history was the shipwreck of the Spanish Armada's *Admiral*, whose people quartered themselves here through the winter in a high-handed manner, that seems not to have hindered kinder relations

The Highlands and Islands

with the fair islanders. A trace of their sojourn appears in the hosiery made by possible descendants of Spanish sailors, still showing the Moorish patterns brought to Andalusia, and thence to this bleak spot. These people do not always get such good words from their rare visitors as do the unsophisticated inhabitants of Foula, which, lying out to the west of the Shetlands, remote like St. Kilda from the Long Island, presents in its circuit of some nine miles what has been judged the noblest cliff scenery in Britain, in summer so clamorously alive with sea-fowl that "the air seemed as if filled with gigantic snow-flakes."

One might here fill pages by quoting from enthusiastic ornithologists, and telling exploits of the daring cragsmen who have exterminated or thinned out some of the nobler fowl; but I have so much to say about man that I must leave beast and bird out of view. The Shetlanders are born fishermen, a craft that calls for no small courage in these latitudes. It is only at odd times they turn to their rugged and thin soil, whose most outstanding production seems the small *Sheltie* ponies, in great demand for use in southern collieries. Sir M. Grant Duff tells of one brought to the mainland, that it had to learn what oats were good for. As for the hungry sheep, a Midland squire I knew once transported a flock of them to England, where they forthwith fell to cropping their way through the hedges in which they found unwontedly toothsome pasture. Even domestic animals may show a touch of the sea, for seals are some-



W. Smith
June 1893

Thule

times tamed as family pets. Otters are the Shetlands' amphibious beasts of prey. The great game here is the "Ca'in' whales," now and then a sperm whale, that sometimes blunder into narrow voes, to be assailed with a general hue-and-cry of every soul that can get near them, as described in the *Pirate*, and in Mr. D. Gorrie's *Summers and Winters in the Orkneys*.

Rounding the point of Torness, and stretching across the mouth of the bay, the fleet of small craft again hove into view, and pressed upon the rear of the slowly-advancing and imprisoned whales. Among the onlookers there was now intense excitement, the greatest anxiety being manifested lest the detached wing should follow the previous practice of the main army, and again break the line of the boats in a victorious charge. The shoutings and noise of the boatmen recommenced, and echoed from shore to shore of the beautiful and secluded bay. A fresh alarm seized the monsters, but instead of wheeling about, and rushing off to the open sea as before, they dashed rapidly forwards a few yards, pursued by the boats, and were soon floundering helplessly in the shallows. The scene that ensued was of the most exciting description. Fast and furious the boatmen struck and stabbed to right and left, while the people on the shore, forming an auxiliary force, dashed down to assist in the massacre, wielding all sorts of weapons, from roasting-spits to ware-forks. The poor wounded monsters lashed about with their tails, imperilling life and limb, and the ruddy hue of the water along the stretch of shore soon indicated the extent of the carnage. The whales that had received their death stroke emitted shrill cries, accompanied with a strange snorting and humming noise, which has been not inaptly compared to the distant sound of military drums pierced by the sharp piping of fifes. As the blood of the dead

The Highlands and Islands

and dying more deeply incarnadined the sea, it gave a dreadful aspect of wholesale butchery to the murderous close of the summer whale-chase. Some of the larger whales displayed great tenacity of life, and survived repeated strokes and stabs, but the unequal conflict closed at last, and no fewer than a hundred and seventy carcasses were dragged up the beach. One or two slight accidents occurred, but to me it seemed marvellous that the boatmen did not injure each other as much as the whales amid the confusion and excitement of the scene.

The largest of the Shetlands also bears the name of Mainland, on the east side of which nestles Lerwick, the only town in these islands. Chiefly consisting of one long, narrow flagged street, with a modern esplanade upon a crescent bay, some of the houses actually standing in the water, for the convenience, it is said, of the smugglers who were frequent visitors, Lerwick is taken to resemble a Dutch seaport, a comparison carried out by the Dutch and other foreign fishermen familiar here. A new town has in our time sprung up on higher ground above. The place of Kirkwall's Cathedral is taken by a very fine Town Hall, to the decoration of which the magistrates of Amsterdam and Hamburg contributed in recognition of old intercourse, as did several Scottish municipalities. Fort Charlotte, now station of the Naval Reserve, was originally built by Oliver Cromwell, who stretched his heavy hand so far north. The harbour is locked by the precipitous Bressay Island, outside of which lies the sundered Holm of Noss, once reached from its neighbour by a dizzy cradle, swung from cliff to cliff, which might

Thule

well be revived as one of the "fearful joys" of the Earl's Court Exhibition.

Other sights of the Mainland are Scalloway, on the west coast, the ancient capital, where the tyrant Earl Patrick built a castle ; Fitful Head, with its grand view from the end of the southern promontory ; the Broch of Mousa, most perfect example of such structures, on an islet off the east coast of this promontory ; and Papa Stour, an island on the other side, riddled with creeks and caves, one of which MacCulloch dubbed the finest in Britain. Then the main island is pitted with countless lochs, "one for every day in the year," in which, as in the inlets, fishing can still be had free.

To speak of the other islands, Yell, Fetlar, Whalsay and their satellites, would be merely repetition of similar characteristics as summed up in *Black's Guide*, their interior usually a dull stretch of hills, bogs, and pools, but the coast, especially on the west side, a wonderful show : "Mural precipices over 1000 feet high, the abode of myriads of sea-fowl of all descriptions ; solitary islets, feeding on their flat green tops flocks of timid lambs ; isolated 'stacks,' cleaving the skies ; gloomy 'hellyers,' within whose sunless shades the tide ebbs and flows ; here a gravelly beach piled high with heaps of cod and tusk and ling in process of curing ; there a narrow *gio*, with a herd of seals sunning themselves on its tangle-covered rocks,—such are the varieties of the Shetland seascape and landscape."

The northernmost island is Unst, which Mr. Tudor pronounces at once the most grandly picturesque of

The Highlands and Islands

them all, "bar Foula," and also the most thriving, for along with some remarkable mineral rarities, it has oases of cultivation that have earned it the title, "Garden of the Shetlands." One of the stone circles here is believed to mark the ancient meeting-place of the Shetland *Thing*, or popular assembly, before its removal to Tingwall on the Mainland. In modern days Unst has been famed as residence of the Edmonstons, that family of naturalists, and as sojourn of Biot, the French savant, while carrying out his delicate astronomical measurements. In Biot's account of this task, he praises the warm hearts and peaceful lives of the Shetland families, so close knit in kindness, but for which he could not imagine what kept them in their poor and ungenial country.

Off the north end of Unst, seven hundred miles from the Bishop's Rock Lighthouse of Scilly, England's most southerly point, our Ultima Thule is the isolated crag of Muckle Flugga. Here towers a lighthouse, the building of which, half a century ago, was itself a perilous achievement, as with so many more of

Those ever-burning fires that smile
O'er night's bleak ocean many a mile,
To welcome Albion's truant child
From Indian shore or western wild.

Lighthouses have indeed been a boon to the navigators of these stormy seas, as steamers to their inhabitants, though of one pious islander it is recorded how his first acquaintance with such a fiery craft fulfilled his vision of the Day of Judgment.

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN OF THE MIST

WE have seen how the Orcadians are mainly Norse. Landing on Caithness, once a shelf of wild *Catti*, or on its *Sutherland*, we find clans like the Gunns, the Keiths, and the Mackays, plainly or possibly of Viking stock, and a swarm of Sinclairs whose chiefs came from the south as confessed Normans. The greatest of the Macaulays, who seems to set little store by his Scottish descent, boasted his clan as sons of Olaf. All along the north-west coasts and in the islands we must note how common are Norse place-names, given by god-fathers who often brought gifts of fire and sword to the christening, or again, as in more than one authentic instance within historic records, might be shipwrecked Danes settling down by accident in some no-man's-corner. Who can say what crews from other European lands may not have found or forced the same hospitality? As soldiers rather, Scots went much abroad in early days, and some of them came back again, not always leaving behind women and children of uncouth speech. Cromwell's men, by the way, did not scunner to look

The Highlands and Islands

upon Highland daughters of Heth. We catch modern Saxons intruding here, who, after a generation or two, —so experience shows in our own time,—may grow as ardent Gaels as ever chorused “Auld Lang Syne” at Highland gatherings. If one desire some idea of the cross-strains in this miscellany of population, let him read Skene’s *Highlanders* as corrected by his recent editor, Dr. Macbain, and by the author himself in his more mature *Celtic Scotland*. It is far from clear how much Pict and how much Scot went to the making of a Gaelic-speaking race, which, the harder one looks at it, the more puzzlingly suggests that hero described by a modern ballad-maker—

In a knot himself he ties,
With his grizzly head appearing in the centre of his thighs,
Till the petrified spectator asks in paralysed alarm,
Where may be the warrior’s body, which is leg and which is arm.

To the hopeless question, Who were the Picts? there are two main schools of answering guesswork: one holding them an older stock, displaced or overlain by Gaels; the other taking them as a Celtic people, reinforced from Ireland or elsewhere. As to the Celts, ethnologists have a good deal to say and sing, but by no means in chorus. Shall we trust the Milesian tale of their coming from Spain, bringing their courteous manners and that watchword *mañana*, honoured in the Hebrides as in Iberian lands—a consideration for Buckle’s handling of Scottish and Spanish characteristics? Did their race flourish in Etruria when the Romans were still kilted in wolf-skins? Are we to

Children of the Mist

look for their ancestors in Greece, as Professor Blackie would have liked to believe? Were they not rather Phœnicians, a race notoriously given to emigration? Did they start farther back in the blessed Mesopotamia, perhaps walking straight out of the Garden of Eden, since the purest Gaelic has been seriously defined as "that spoken by Adam"?

I wonder that no more has been made of a kinship between Gaelic and Arab customs—the proud independence of clans living in ancestral feuds chequered by rules of scrupulous hospitality, the division of work among men and women, the raids in which young swashbucklers win their spurs by booty of black cattle and camels; there are several such points likening those *Bens* to *Macs* a little mummified by a dry climate, who would soon learn to skip over bogs and to abuse factors instead of pashas. The Wahabi sect of Arabia has some correspondence with Scottish Presbyterianism as kept pure in the Highlands. The Arab burnous could easily be tinted as a plaid; and in some parts of Arabia, it appears, a kind of philabeg is worn. In the Highlands there is a stunted love for a horse; and the seaside Arab can manage a *dhow* as well as our West Islanders. The matter of language of course presents some difficulty, but ethnologists are skilled in getting over difficulties.

Egypt and Scythia are other cradles suggested for the Celt, for whom also has been claimed a filial interest in the mysterious traces of the Hittites. Descent from Chaldean or Accadian sages had better

The Highlands and Islands

be reserved for the Lowland Scots, so prominent as law-givers or instructors in the modern world. Speculators of past generations always had the lost Ten Tribes to draw upon. Joseph, certainly, is recorded as wearing tartan in his youth, and being carried off to market in Egypt by Macgregors of the period. Higher criticism, on the other hand, has quenched the pretensions of those chiefs who fondly looked back on their ancestors as using a private boat at the flood, that may well have affected this land of Ararats. A Highland tourist of a century ago tells how his host entertained him with a boastful tale of the antiquity and grandeur of the clan Donnachie, known to ignorant Sassenachs as Robertson. The bored guest tried to change the subject with, "I am of the clan Adam, which I believe is the oldest of them all."—"So are the Hottentots!" quoth the offended chieftain, and went on with his long genealogy.

Turning in quite another direction for an ancestry, might one not make out much in common between those bellicose clans and the Red Indian tribes of America? But when it comes to facts and figures, one is not sure that the Highlanders can boast any clearer title than that of "Children of the Mist." And if this seem an unworthy pedigree, let them remember the proud Roman whose fabled ancestor brought little but legends to cement a foundation of Latins, Sabines, and Etruscans, that became built so high by materials from all the ends of the earth.

To travel through Scotland, it has been well said, is to travel through the Waverley Novels. The north



KYLE OF TONGUE AND BEN LOYAL.

Children of the Mist

end of the kingdom, however, makes an exception, which lay beyond Sir Walter's ken, but for one swoop he took round the islands. Perhaps because it was frame for none of his stories, this region from Caithness to Kintail is less visited by tourists, though it contains such grand scenes as the Cave of Smoo, Loch Maree, and the worn-down mountains of Torridon. It is a smaller edition of the rest of Scotland, its sea-bound lowlands facing to the east, its highlands to the west, where their jutting promontories and deep fiords seem made to dovetail into the opposite island shores, with which this side was long closely connected in peace and war, bringing about an interfusion of enterprisingly restless neighbours. On the other side, landward, a remarkably sharp division marks the province of the Gael from that of the ex-Goth.

Horace himself would be puzzled to find a lucid order for the history of the North-Western Highlands, so obscurely entangled are its thickets of legend and so dim often its clearings of chronicle. We catch vague glimpses of a struggle between the mainland power of the Earl of Ross and that of the Macdonald Lords of the Isles. More than once these titles became fused, till their rival powers died out, and they were both merged in the crown. The famous battle of Harlaw was not so much a struggle between Highlander and Lowlander as an attempt on the part of the Lord of the Isles to seize the Earldom that had invaded his water-walled domains. When adventurous James V., sailing in person to Stornoway, had been able to over-

The Highlands and Islands

awe but hardly to master those quarrelsome western Rodericks, Red and Black, the task of training or exterminating them was offered in turn to Huntly, to Argyll, and to the company of Fife gentlemen, who in the Lewis imitated the enterprise and the failure of Elizabeth's Virginia colonists. Then out of the welter of anarchy arose one dominant name, to play over the northern islands and mountains the same absorbing part as the Campbells in the south.

Who were those Mackenzies of Kintail, that, passing over to Lewis, grew to be better known by the title of Seaforth? Like the Campbells, they were at one time fain to claim descent from a Norman family, that of the Irish Fitzgerald. But this clan has had the fortune to possess an historian on the premises, so to speak, in the person of the late Alexander Mackenzie, one of the most zealous and industrious of Highland antiquaries. He declares the Fitzgerald origin "impossible," and takes back the "sons of Kenneth" to one O'Beolan, or Gilleoin, who married the daughter of Rollo, the pirate earl, before Norsemen became Normans. This origin is admittedly nebulous; but when the epoch gets into its teens, sons and daughters of the line appear as clearly intermarrying with Bruces, Grahams, St. Clairs, and other Lowlanders, some of whom were little better than English barons, the Plantagenet blood of Normandy and the MacAlpine royalty being among their infusions, which also filter down from kings of Norway, France, and the Isle of Man. Through a shadowy ancestral Gillanders, "servant of St. Andrew," in the

Children of the Mist

far background, the Clan Ross, *alias* Andrias, is made out a senior branch of the same stock ; and there is a less famed Clan Matheson that would have itself known as the original tree.

Not to give the reader a headache over genealogical tables more involved than the story of the "Ring and the Book," one may ask him to consider if the youths and maidens of those names were alabaster grandsires all through the centuries when Viking Jarls ruled the islands and swept their raids over half Scotland. Such considerations go to bear out the comparison of Highland purity of race to an old knife well provided, in the course of time, with another handle and more than one new blade. A fitter metaphor would be a faded and partly re-dyed tartan, whose intricate pattern of crossing stripes is hardly distinguishable without spectacles. Unless in metaphors, at long range, I am not disposed to argue with Celtic historians, who, from Dr. Johnson perhaps, have learned his trick of knocking you down with the butt end of a pistol when it misses fire. But surely enough has been said to show how these much-vexed questions of genealogy give footing no firmer than the bogs of Gaeldom and Galldom.

The Mackenzies first come into note as seated at Kintail, in the south-west corner of Ross. Here the "Five Sisters of Kintail" now look frowningly down on a stranger's deer forest, once held by Mackenneths on somewhat doubtful terms from the Earls of Ross ; and so long as the Lordship of the Isles lasted, they were vassals also of that power. Their stronghold

The Highlands and Islands

was the castle on Eilean Donan, where Loch Duich and Loch Long separate as inner recesses of Loch Alsh, a beautifully winding sheet of blue water, "fringed with golden seaweed," beneath the shade of grassy cones that shut in one of the fairest Highland scenes. Here they lived at hot feud with Glengarry and other neighbours, exchanging tit for tat of raids and revenges till, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, Kenneth Mackenzie took a rise in the world by shifty arts to win royal favour, as well as by unscrupulous readiness to do without it. When the Five Undertakers failed to lay out the turbulent Lewis, this chief, presently created Lord Kintail, got a commission of fire and sword to play civilising agent there. The last act of the Macleods' defence was at the islet of Berrisay, when the Mackenzies forced its garrison to surrender by exposing their wives and children upon a rock overwhelmed by the tide.

Thus set astride on both sides of the Minch, the head of the victorious clan took from the Lewis his higher title Earl of Seaforth, whose ups and downs went mainly with those of the house of Stuart. As loyal Cavaliers, though they began by withstanding Montrose, the Seaforths suffered exile and forfeiture under Cromwell. Again they shared the misfortunes of James II., rewarded by a paper Marquisate. The fifth Earl was at Sheriffmuir, and made an attempt to prolong the struggle in his own country. Four years later the banished chief returned to Lewis to lead the rising of 1719, that, quickly stamped out, is not known



DUNROBIN CASTLE, SUTHERLANDSHIRE.

Children of the Mist

to every schoolboy, though a little prudence or luck might have made it as formidable as that of 1745, and more famous, had not a cannon ball cut short Charles XII. of Sweden's design to join the enterprise.

With three hundred Spanish soldiers, the vanguard of an Armada some thousands strong driven back to Spain by the winds that have more than once favoured our Protestant throne, and with a few hundreds of his own clan, Seaforth invaded the mainland by way of Glenshiel. He was joined by some other Highlanders, including a party of Macgregors under Rob Roy, while loyal clans like the Rosses and Munros rallied to support a force of English and Dutch soldiers which marched against the rebels from Inverness. The encounter was a drawn match; Scott seems to go too far in saying that the Jacobites had the best of it; but Seaforth being seriously wounded, and some of his followers not very keen in the cause, the rebels dispersed at nightfall, the Spanish soldiers surrendering next day. It was on this occasion that a wounded Munro officer on the Whig side was saved by the devotion of his servant, as mentioned by Burt, the poor fellow shielding his master's body with his own and receiving several balls before they were both rescued by a sergeant, who had sworn on his dirk to rescue the chieftain at all risks. Another trait of Highland manners appears in one body of clansmen having been lent to Seaforth by an obliging neighbour, but for a single day only. With such auxiliaries even victory could be of little profit.

Seaforth, again driven into exile, was pardoned and

The Highlands and Islands

allowed to end his days in Scotland. His son had the gratitude to hold aloof from Prince Charlie in 1745, and though some of the Mackenzies took part in the rising, the mass of the clan was kept quiet by Lord President Forbes of Culloden, who perhaps did more than any other man to check the movement that had its checkmate at his home. The next chief, who received an Irish peerage, presently advanced to the former title of Earl of Seaford, showed his loyalty by raising and commanding a famous regiment. With him the original line died out ; but a collateral heir was created Lord Seaford, and after being half-ruined by keeping company with the Prince Regent, died without male issue in 1815. The chiefship of this clan, as of others, fell into a chaos of dispute, as to which the reader must be referred to its history above mentioned. " Who will, may hear Sordello's story told." That authority pronounces for the stock of Allangrange ; but the most prosperous branch is now grafted into the ducal house of Sutherland, which has succeeded Seaforth as chief title in the Northern Highlands.

A terrible story this is, in its early chapters, of bloodshed, rapine, and treachery, luridly illustrating those good old times of the poets. Of the many Mackenzies who have made their mark on modern history, two Sir Georges earned an uncanny renown as persecutors of the Covenanters, one of them better famed as founder of the Advocates' Library. To their date belongs the " Doom of Kintail," not less famous in the Highlands than the " Curse of Cowdray " in Sussex. The Seer of Brahan, who left other predictions said to

Children of the Mist

have come true, was burned as a sorcerer by Lady Seaforth, under Charles II., and while being led to the stake he is recorded to have pronounced this "Doom"—

I see a Chief, the last of his House, both deaf and dumb. He will be the father of four fair sons, all of whom he shall follow to the tomb. He shall live careworn, and die mourning, knowing that the honours of his House are to be extinguished for ever, and that no future Chief of the Mackenzies shall rule in Kintail. After lamenting over the last and most promising of his sons, he himself shall sink into the grave, and the remnant of his possessions shall be inherited by a white-coifed lassie from the East, and she shall kill her sister. As a sign by which it shall be known that these things are coming to pass, there shall be four great lairds in the days of the last Seaforth (Gairloch, Chisholm, Grant, and Raasay), one of whom shall be buck-toothed, the second hare-lipped, the third half-witted, and the fourth a stammerer. Seaforth, when he looks round and sees them, may know that his sons are doomed to death, and that his broad lands shall pass away to the stranger, and that his line shall come to an end.

The Psychical Society might examine this most circumstantial and well-vouched case of the second sight. Mr. A. Mackenzie asserts that the Doom had been handed down for generations; and he quotes several witnesses, one of them Lord Lieutenant of the county, another Sir Walter Scott, as testifying to knowledge of its provisions before they came to pass in due time. The last Lord Seaford was partly deaf, and so taciturn as to pass for dumb. He had reason not to be light of speech. Four neighbouring lairds showed the infirmities mentioned by the seer. His four sons

The Highlands and Islands

died one by one before their broken-hearted father. He was succeeded by his eldest daughter, widow of Admiral Hood, our naval commander in the East, who might be taken for "white-coifed" in her widow's weeds. In a sense she did kill her sister, through a carriage accident when the heiress was driving. Thus were almost literally fulfilled the predictions that had so long hung over this family.

The "stranger" that became second husband to the daughter of Seaforth and took her name, was a Galloway Stewart, whose ancestor came into Scotland as a stranger indeed, a Norman adventurer, destined by fortunes of love and war to breed more kings than those weird sisters of Forres foresaw. As we go south from the Mackenzie country, we get among Frasers, Gordons, Cummings, Murrays, Grahams and other clans of Southron, Saxon, or Norman race, that pressed northwards to cut out homes for themselves in the mountains, and soon fell under the charm of misty religion, Gaelic, tartans, bare legs, bards, bagpipes and all, even as the same sentiment may be mastering the intruders from Chicago, or Capel Court, who to-day conquer the Highlands at the edge of the dollar.

One of the most truly ancient clans is perhaps the "wild Macraes," long ill famed for their robber prowess and for deft archery that could not stand against the Saxon long-bows. They seem, in some unexplained way, to have been hereditary allies or dependants of the greater Mackenzie name; and it may be that they represent a prehistoric stock enslaved as Gibeonites by Celtic

Children of the Mist

conquerors ; but they declare themselves to have served the Mackenzies in no less honourable rank than that of bodyguard, and one story goes so far as to make the original Gilleoin the son of an ancestral Macraeth. Another account is that they were kinsfolk adopted by the Mackenzie chiefs in a scarcity of heirs. About a century ago, almost all the inhabitants of Kintail, the cradle of the Mackenzie power, bore the name of Macrae, which had ousted that of Macaulay and others once mixed with the dominant clan. When the Earl of Seaforth raised his famous regiment, so many of the men belonged to that subordinate sept, that it was spoken of as the "Macrae regiment" ; and its mutiny at Leith in 1778 was known as the "Macrae affair." These new soldiers had refused to leave the country till certain grievances were redressed. With pipes playing and plaids on poles for colours, they marched to Arthur's Seat, and there held out for several days, provisioned by sympathisers in Edinburgh. In this case, the authorities had the good sense to conciliate them by satisfying their complaints ; then they marched down again, headed by their officers, and cheerfully embarked, not a man being brought to punishment, a leniency justified by their future conduct on many a battlefield.

One chieftain of the Macraes has distinguished himself as Chairman of the Edinburgh School Board, and as a worthy Writer to the Signet, a hint how the wild Highlandman can enter into the conditions of modern life. It is always a satisfaction for an amateur to correct a professed genealogist, and I note that the Mackenzie

The Highlands and Islands

historian above mentioned errs in promoting a younger brother to the Macrae chieftainship. My conscience pricks me that this wrong might have some relation to the story I set going, "with a cocked hat and stick." More years ago than any of us will care to count, I was walking with those brothers, the younger by chance in the silk hat and such like of professional life, the elder more rustically arrayed. My story is that a client heaving into sight—so far true—the chief borrowed his brother's headgear to make a becoming appearance, and for such accommodation sold his birthright.

I can see Sir Colin Macrae and other Highland friends laying hands on their dirks, or umbrellas, with a frown for one who makes light of sacred things. But I would ask them whether the education of a race does not lead to a shelving of childish toys, nursery fairy tales, and schoolroom squabbles. On week days, at least, we may be content with the sober trappings of city life, yet keep a show of tartan for holiday wear. "Saxon, or Dane, or whatever we be," the Celtic element has a way of coming to the top as a smart feather in our cap, sometimes indeed as a bee in our bonnet. The Gael, adapting himself to trousers and pockets, need not forget his romance, his poetry, his picturesque points, as he does choose to forget some uglier traits of his past. If he call me a Sassenach reviler, I can tell him that I, too, have kindly Highland blood in my veins; and let him tell me precisely what is Highland blood, which is more than I can. Wherever it first sprang, from China to Peru, I take it to be

Children of the Mist

something like Orange Pekoe tea, for which, unmixed, our age has not so much use, but which gives a piquant flavour to that choice blend of humanity apparently destined to become the salt of the world.

This view of the Highlander's mission will not commend itself either to Cockney caricaturists or to Pan-Celtic Congresses. But I find my own sentiment well expressed by one of the most eloquent voices of the Celtic Renaissance, the author styled Fiona Macleod, long hidden in mist—now alas! in silent darkness,—whose two names, perhaps unwittingly chosen, seem to record the union of Norse and Gaelic blood that makes the so-called Scottish Celt, incarnate pseudonym as he may be. To these words the arrantest Saxon should heartily say *Amen*.

The Celtic element in our national life has a vital and great part to play. We have a most noble idea if we will but accept it. And that is not to perpetuate feuds, not to try to win back what is gone away upon the wind, not to repay ignorance with scorn or dulness with contempt or past wrongs with present hatred, but so to live, so to pray, so to hope, so to work, so to achieve, that we, what is left of the Celtic races, of the Celtic genius, may permeate the greater race of which we are a vital part, so that with this emotion, Celtic love of duty, and Celtic spirituality, a nation greater than any the world has seen may issue, a nation refined and strengthened by the wise relinquishings and steadfast ideals of Celt and Saxon, united in a common fatherland, and in singleness of pride and faith.

If we look back instead of forward, Sir Arthur Keith, who is a son of this far northern region as well as one of our most eminent anthropologists, has now fluttered

The Highlands and Islands

some patriotic dove-cotes by expounding how Celt, Saxon and Norseman are all chips of the same very old block that came to our island by different deliveries and at different stages of seasoning, to be shaped, polished, and mingled like spillikins by the tools of time.

Let me not be held guilty as trifling with certain matters which some of my countrymen seem to take over seriously. Far, indeed, be it from me and my friends to love Scotland better than truth ; but not less far would I hold aloof from the laughing hyænas who snarl or grin at that native land and her people. I have tried to put good points and other points in the fairest light, for the information of strangers, often getting their notions of the country from misty reminiscences of poetry and fiction. And as I have more than once illustrated this account by verses quoted from two teachers of my youth, who wrote of the Highlands both in jest and in earnest, so let me end in warm words of an old schoolfellow of mine, the late T. S. Omond :

While huge Ben Nevis rears his sovereign crown,
And dark Glencoe looks sternly wrathful down,
And Skye's grim crests in savage blackness frown—

While many an isle, in summer bliss serene,
Floats on its limpid floor of lusted sheen,
And hangs the enchanted wave and sky between—

While braes are purple, glens are green, and blue
The sea that mirrors all with heavenly hue,
Scotland ! to thee my heart shall still be true.

Index

Ailsa Craig, 10
 Appin, 81
 Ardrishaig, 10
 Ardtornish, 104
 Argyll, House of, 44
 "Argyll's Bowling-Green," 46
 Arisaig, 96
 Arran, 7

 Badges, Clan, 39
 Bagpipe, the, 88
 Ballachulish, 12
 Barone Hill, 8
 Barra, 184
 Benbecula, 185
 Ben Cruachan, 12
 Ben More (Mull), 77
 Uist, 185
 Ben Nevis, 16, 90
 Black Watch, the, 32
 Bonnets, Scottish, 24
 Boswell, James, 119
 Braemar, 19
 Brahan, Seer of, 226
 Brander, Pass of, 12
 Brodick, 9
 Brogues, 25
 Bute, Isle of, 6
 Kyles of, 10

 Cairngorms, the, 95
 Caithness, 217
 Caledonian Asylum, the, 20
 Caledonian Forest, the, 15
 Railway, 16
 Callernish, Stones of, 187
 Campbells, the, 43
 Campbell of Isla's Folk Tales, 114

Campbeltown, 60
 Canada, Highlanders in, 168
 Canna, 84
 Cantyre, Mull of, 10, 59
 Catholic and Protestant neighbours, 84
 111
 Celtic origins, 218
 Charlie, Prince, escape, 128
 Clan Chattan, the, 100
 Clan Kay, the, 100
 Clan Massacres, 83
 Clans of foreign origin, 228
 Climate of West Highlands, 7
 Cluny, Macphersons of, 102
 Clyde, the, 4
 "Cobbler," the, 46
 Colonsay, 73
 Comyns, the, 101
 Coolins, the, 137
 Crinan Canal, 11
 Crofters' Commission, the, 189
 Culdees, the, 68

 Dalriad Scots, the, 60
 "Dark Mile," the, 108
 Deeside, 16
 Diarmid, 49
 Doom of Kintail, the, 226
 Donnachie, Clan, 220
 Dunollie Castle, 58
 Dunoon, 6
 Dunottar Castle, 16
 Dunstaffnage, 58
 Dunvegan Castle, 128

 Eigg, Scur of, 73
 Emigration, 151

The Highlands and Islands

- Eriskay, 174
 Evictions and Emigrations, 150

 Fair Isle, the, 211
 "Fiery Cross," the, 97
 Fingal, 71
 Forbes of Culloden, 226
 Fort-Augustus, 94
 Fort-William, 93
 Forty-Second Regiment, the, 32
 Foula, 212
 Free Church of Scotland, 85

 Gaelic Poetry, 112
 Glasgow Steamers, 4
 Glencoe, 51
 Glenelg, 109
 Glengarry chief, 105
 Glen Rosa, 10
 Glen Uisnish, 185
 Goatfell, 9
 Goodrich Freer, Miss, 176
 Gordon Cumming, Miss, 144
 Gordons, the, 41
 Grange, Lady, story of, 193
 Great Glen, the, 95
 Greenock, 5

 Haco, King, 196
 Hamerton, P. G., "A Painter's Camp
 in the Highlands," 46
 Harlaw, battle of, 221
 Harris, 186
 "Heather Ale," 30
 Helensburgh, 5
 Herring Fishery, 180
 Highland Clearances, history of, 160
 Highland Railway, 16
 Highland Regiments, the, 29, 166
 Highlanders, character of, 18
 Poetry of, 113
 Holy Isles the, 65
 Homespun Weaving, 179
 Hoy, 209

 Inis Fraoch, legend of, 48
 Inveraray, 55
 Inverlochy, 93
 Inverness, 17
 Iona (Icolmkill), 66, 134
 Isla, 59

 "Jacob's Pillow," 59
 Johnson, Dr., 117
 Jura, 77

 Keith, Sir Arthur, 231
 Sir R. M., 24
 Kelp, 178
 Kilchurn Castle, 48
 Kilt, the, 21
 Kintail, 223
 Kirkwall, 208
 Kisimul Castle, 184
 Knapdale, 56

 Lady's Rock, legend of, 82
 Lamnish, 9
 Lerwick, 214
 Lewis, 186
 Lismore, 74
 Loch Alsh, 224
 Awe, 11, 47
 Coruisk, 137
 Creran, 54
 Etive, 12
 Fyne, 10
 Hourn, 109
 Maddy, 185
 Marec, 66
 Quoich, 106
 Roag, 186
 Seaforth, 186
 Sunart, 110
 Lochaber, 99
 Lochiel, Camerons of, 99
 "Long Island," the, 171
 Lora, Falls of, 12
 Lorne, 43

 Macaulays, the, 217
 Macraes, the, 228
 MacCulloch's Tours, 141
 Macdonald, Flora, 127
 Macdonalds, the, 103
 Macdougalls, the, 58
 MacGregor, Gregor, 156
 Rob Roy, 15, 225
 Macgregors, the, 12
 Macintyres, the, 103
 Mackays, the, 217
 Mackenzies, the, 222
 Mackintoshes, the, 100
 Maclean of Coll, 130
 Macleods, the, 188

Index

- Magnus "Barefoot," 22
 Malcolm family, 59
 Mallaig, 96
 Man, Isle of, 60
 Minch, the, 171
 Moidart, 109
 Morven, 74
 Mull, 77
 Munros, the, 225
 Mutiny of the 42nd Highlanders, 32
 of the Macraes, 229

 Nordereys and Sudereys, the, 61
 Norse Blood in Highlands, 217
 North Uist, 185

 Oban, 11, 55
 Observatory, the Ben Nevis, 91
 Orkneys, the, 195
 Oronsay, 73
 Ossian, 112

 Paps of Jura, the, 77
 Pennant's Tour, 120
 Philabeg, the, 23
 Picts, the, 218
 Plaid, the, 25
 "Plantation" of Lewis, 188

 Quiraing, the,
 Queen Victoria's love of Tartan, 19

 Rannoch, Moor of, 16
 Rob Roy, 15, 225
 Rodill, 187
 Ross of Mull, the, 66
 Rosses, the, 225
 Rothesay, 6
 "Rough Bounds," the, 95

 St. Columba, 67
 St. Kentigern, 68
 St. Kilda, 190
 St. Ninian, 67
 St. Patrick, 67

 Schools of Pipers, 89
 Seaforth, Earls of, 224,
 Selkirk, Lord, his Canadian colony,
 155
 Shapinsay, 208
 Shetlands, the, 195
 Shiant Isles, 73
 Sinclairs, the, 217
 Skerryvore, 184
 Skye, Dr. Johnson in, 122
 Slogans, 39
 "Small Isles," the, 74
 Smith, Alexander, in Skye, 145
 Sodor and Man, 61
 South Uist, 176
 Spanish Treasure, 82
 Sporrán, the, 24
 Staffa, 70
 Stennis, Stones of, 207
 Stewarts, the, 228
 Stornoway, 189
 Storr, the, 139
 Stromness, 208
 Superstition, 65, 189, 200
 Sutherland evictions, the, 157

 Tarbert, Cantyre, 10
 Long Island, 186
 Tartans, 19
 Tiree, 176
 Tobermory, 77
 Torridon, 221
 Trews, 22, 27

 Uist, South and North, 185
 Unst, 198, 215

 Vitrified Forts, 94

 Waller Paton's pictures, 81
 Waverley Novels, the, 220
 West Highland Railway, 15
 Whale catching, 213
 Whisky, 30

THE END

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